

The Political Use of ‘New Media’ in the 2014 South African National Election

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Abstract

New media is seen as having a big impact on the way modern political parties run their campaigns during election periods.

This paper focuses on answering the question: How was new media used in the 2014 South African national election? It does this by creating a context regarding the understanding of what new media is, how it is used in politics, and what impact it has on electioneering and political campaign strategies. Three case studies, the Obama campaign and the 2014 Indian and Brazilian elections, are used to highlight how new media has impacted on elections.

This analysis is then framed into a set of criteria for success that is used to measure the chosen South African political parties against, to determine whether or not they used new media well in the 2014 South African national election. A set of criteria for success thus makes it possible to rank and assign points to each party and from those points determine whether that party used new media well or poorly. Each party is given a score out of 50.

The other 50 points were awarded based on a subjective view regarding the actual use of language and focused voter communication on new media platforms, specifically Twitter. This was done by looking at the insights garnered from the literature regarding electoral campaigning, South Africa's demographic and geographic differences and seeing if the parties analysed in this study employed communication strategies to target these voter differences.

This study found that the parties identified, when measured against the set of criteria for success that was created and the subjective views of the way in which the parties communicated, did not use new media well in the 2014 South African national election. They failed in most cases, with the DA being the exception, to build the necessary online platforms or to communicate effectively through new media platforms. There was also too little focus on addressing voter apathy in the youth and there was a lack of targeted communication to specific social groups. Parties also failed to present themselves as a viable alternative to voters who did not already identify with a party or those who were looking for an alternative party.

Opsomming

Nuwe media het 'n duidelike impak op die manier waarop moderne politieke partye en partyleiers hulle verkiesingsveldtogte bestuur.

Hierdie studie fokus daarom op die vraag: Hoe is nuwe media tydens die 2014 Suid-Afrikaanse nasionale verkiesing gebruik? Dit word gedoen deur konteks te gee aan wat nuwe media behels, hoe dit in die moderne politiek gebruik word, en wat die impak is wat nuwe media op verkiesings en verkiesingsveldtogte het. Drie gevallestudies, die Obama-veldtog, asook die 2014 verkiesings in Indië en Brasilië, word gebruik om spesifieke elemente oor die impak wat nuwe media op verkiesings het, uit te wys.

Die ontleding word dan gebruik om 'n kriteria-raamwerk te skep waarteen spesifieke Suid-Afrikaanse politieke partye se gebruik van sosiale media in die 2014 verkiesing gemeet word, om hulle sukses al dan nie daarmee te bepaal. Die sukseskriteria maak dit moontlik om politieke partye in 'n rangorde te plaas en punte aan hulle toe te ken. Die punte-telling, uit 'n totaal van 50, word dan gebruik om te bepaal waarom die partye sukses behaal het, of nie.

Nog 50 punte word toegeken op die basis van 'n subjektiewe oordeel oor taalgebruik aanslag asook geteikende kieserskommunikasie op nuwe media platforms, meer spesifiek Twitter. Dit word gedoen deur insigte uit 'n studie van relevante literatuur oor die verkiesingsveldtog, Suid-Afrika se demografiese en geografiese verskille asook om te oordeel of die partye wat in die studie bestudeer word kommunikasie strategieë benut het om die verskillende groeperings van kiesers te teiken.

Die studie bevind dat die spesifieke partye, gemeet teen die raamwerk vir kriteria vir sukses, sowel as die subjektiewe opinie oor taalgebruik en aanslag in kommunikasie, hulle sleg van hul taak gekwyt het in die 2014 nasionale verkiesing in Suid-Afrika.

Hulle het in meeste gevalle, met die DA as 'n uitsondering, nie geslaag om die nodige digitale-platforms te vestig en om suksesvol deur die nuwe media platforms te kommunikeer nie. Hulle het ook nie geslaag om die apatie van die Suid-Afrikaanse jeug aan te spreek nie en daar was 'n gebrek aan geteikende en relevante kommunikasie met spesifieke sosiale groepe. Die partye het ook nie daarin geslaag om die kiesers wat partyloos is, of van party wil verander, 'n beter opsie te bied nie.

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Chapter 1 – Introduction

During the past two decades there has been a dramatic increase in the number of people using new media platforms (blogs, websites, podcasts) and social media platforms (Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Pinterest), which are collectively known as “Web 2.0” (Barr, 2014). This growth has impacted directly on the way political campaigns are run and how politicians communicate with their electorate (Fulton, 2013).

The term “Web 2.0” was reportedly coined by Dale Dougherty and Tim O’Reilly in collaboration with Media Live International in 2004 when they referred to the second generation of Internet-based services that have those key attributes that allow openness for collaboration and make a high level of interactivity between users on the Internet possible without requiring them to have any programming skills.

The term ‘new media’ is also one that has become popular in contemporary society, but it has many definitions and versions, and can be recognised as problematic. For the purpose of this study Macnamara’s (2011) definition will be used:

[New media] is used in varying ways along with other terms to denote emergent digital media and Internet media. It is a common term in current debate and refers to the range of one-to-one and one-to-many communication applications operating via the Internet including email, chat rooms, newsgroups, websites, blogs, wikis and social networking sites, such as YouTube, MySpace, Facebook and Twitter.

The term ‘traditional’ or ‘old’ media is used in this paper to represent newspapers, print magazines, radio and television.

This growth in the number of Internet users and consumers of new media led Arianna Huffington, the editor-in-chief of *The Huffington Post*, as quoted in *Wired* magazine after the United States presidential election in 2008 that Barack Obama won, to say: “Were it not for the Internet, Barack Obama would not be president. Were it not for the Internet, Barack Obama would not have been the nominee” (Schiffman, 2008).

The Internet, with the use of new media on it, has become a powerful, unregulated platform that has the potential to send a message instantly and reach millions of users with it. Because of this power political parties have adapted their communication and campaign strategies to acquire as many followers, likes and shares as they can to ensure that their campaign messages are amplified by as large a base as possible – thus increasing their chances of winning in an election.

This immediacy, from a message being sent to its reaching millions of followers, means that there is no pause between error and consequence. A scandal, a betrayal or a failure is as quickly spread and shared and can have a dire impact on a politician, a party or a government, as seen in the example of the American politician Anthony Weiner who sent explicit pictures of himself via his cell phone which went public and forced him to resign (*Huffington Post Online*, 2014).

This reality means that any political party in contemporary politics needs to have not only these new media platforms at its disposal but also a very active new media and social media strategy in place to ensure that good news is amplified and bad news suppressed.

This dramatic shift in parties' campaign strategies and execution that has been seen in the United States (Williams and Gulati, 2008) has also been witnessed in other developed countries such as Australia (Barr, 2014 and Macnamara, 2008), as well as developing countries, where new and social media are also starting to play, and in some cases already play, a pivotal role in politics.

In countries like Brazil, according to bizcommunity.com (Durrant, 2014): “Opposition parties are capitalising on the television deficit by making friends on Facebook [...because] nearly 80% of Brazilians aged 16 to 25 use the Internet at least once a week and almost half go online daily.”

In Brazil and India politicians are also taking courses and appointing staff to run political campaigns in the same way Obama ran his 2008 campaign. *The Washington Post* reported in April of 2014: “Indian parties are using Obama-style campaign

tactics in crucial election” and *The Economist* in March of 2014, reporting on the campaign strategies of the top Brazilian candidates, states that:

[because] politicians now want to harness social networks for their election campaigns [...] social networks [such as Facebook and Twitter] offer counsel on how to ‘do an Obama’, in the words of Emmanuel Evita of Twitter, referring to Barack Obama’s astute use of social media in the 2008 presidential race in the United States (*The Economist Online*, 2014 and Gowen, 2014).

In India over the past few years more than 150 million citizens between the ages of 18 and 23 have become eligible to vote, making 75% of the voting population under the age of 35 (Mallet, 2014 and Mckenzie, 2014). The strong growth in the number of eligible voting youth and the massive growth of the online audience in India has led the online site, *Quartz*, to brand the 2014 Indian election the “Twitter election”, a term it picked up from Twitter’s India head Rishi Jaitly, who after seeing the massive growth in the use of Twitter as a communication platform during the election dubbed the 2014 Indian election the “Twitter election” (Merelli, 2014).

The motivation behind politicians’ willingness to use and engage online is not only due to their wanting to grow their support bases, but is also because they know that the Internet is being used as a tool by many other persons to increase offline participation in gatherings such as music events or rallies, or even sometimes riots, that have large consequences in the political and social lives of countries: for example, the Arab Spring, the Occupy Wall Street movement, and the Anonymous organisation that regularly acts against companies and people who they believe have wronged society.

It is thus undeniable that the Internet, and social media platforms on it, have energised and strengthened activism, allowing activists to group together by providing channels of communication and tools for quick exchange of ideas, group creation, and protest assemblies arrangement.

Wired magazine in January of 2012 ran an article on the riots of 2011 called “#riot – how social media fuels social unrest” by Bill Wasik (2011). This extract from their timeline illustrates the impact social media has had on the private and public space:

- January 14: **Tunis, Tunisia** – Sustained protests oust president Zine al-Abidine Ben Ali.
- January 25: **Cairo, Egypt** – Thousands of demonstrators fill Tahrir Square.
- February 3: **Sana, Yemen** – Some 20 000 people gather for a “day of rage”.
- February 14: **Bahrain** – Protestors clash with security forces; at least 44 people are killed in the ensuing months.
- February 16: **Philadelphia** – A “flash” snowball fight turn into a near-riot; 14 high schoolers are arrested.
- February 17: **Libya** – Snipers fire on protestors in what ultimately becomes a month-long civil war.
- February 20: **Morocco** – Nearly 40 000 people in 57 towns rail against the government.
- February 20: **China** – The “Jasmine revolution” is quelled when authorities throttle cell phone services.
- February 23: **Athens** – Up to 100 000 revolt against pay and pension cuts.
- April 16: **Venice Beach, California** – A tweet draws a flash mob to the boardwalk. Gunfire critically wounds one man, and hundreds flee.
- May 30: **Boston** – Responding to Facebook invites, hundreds of kids show up at a late-night beach party; a SWAT team is called.
- June 4: **Shaker Heights, Ohio** – After calls to action online (“Shakers gone shake”), hundreds of teens converge on a fireworks show, provoking skirmishes.
- July 15: **Syria** – Up to one million people clash with police across the country; several are killed.
- August 6: **Tottenham, UK** – A march on a police station leads to a night of arson and destruction.
- August 7: **Enfield, UK** – A message calling on readers to “link up and cause havoc” sparks looting in Enfield Town.
- August 9: **Liverpool, UK** – “That’s my car on fire,” someone tweets. Several other vehicles and buildings are set ablaze as rioting spreads.
- August 15: **San Francisco** – Anonymous hacks the Bay Area Rapid Transit’s website, calling on protestors to mass; hundreds of participants shut down four subway stations.
- September 3: **Israel** – At least 300 000 people march nationwide against income inequality.
- September 17: **New York City** – Day one of Occupy Wall Street brings around 1 000 people to Manhattan’s financial district for a march.
- October 1: **New York City** – More than 700 people are arrested attempting to cross the Brooklyn Bridge.
- October 6: **Multiple locations, US** – Four thousand people assemble in Portland, Oregon; occupations continue in Boston, Chicago, and San Francisco.
- October 15: **Worldwide** – From Tokyo to Zurich, millions protest in 80-plus countries during the Global Day of Rage.
- October 20: **Sirte, Libya** – After months of fighting, Libya celebrates the death of Muammar Qaddafi.
- October 25: **Oakland, California** – An Iraq War veteran is critically injured as police crack down on an Occupy encampment.
- November 6: **Washington, DC** – About 10 000 people surround the White House to protest a proposed oil pipeline from Canadian tar sands to US refineries.

The quote from Cameron Bird that ran with this article summarises the events as follows: “From January, when a dictator fell in the Middle East, to autumn, when protesters settled into American cities, 2011 was a year of marches, mobs and omnipresent occupations” (Wasik, 2011).

This article from *Wired* magazine serves to demonstrate the impact of the Internet and new media and the potential they have to influence society: where they can either promote an individual’s chance for office, if used effectively, or negatively influence the political structure of an entire country. In the paper, *Opening Closed Regimes* (Howard, 2011), the authors write that the evidence gathered regarding the role social media played in shaping political debate in the Arab Spring shows that social media was heavily used to conduct political conversations. This active online group made it possible for them to see that a spike in online revolutionary conversations often preceded major events on the ground. The demographic profile of the individuals most active on these platforms was young, urban and relatively well educated – and many of them were women.

The impact of new media has not only been to amplify the political campaigns and messages of political candidates, but also to shine a spotlight on corruption and inequality. This means that in the developed world, where Internet penetration is high and access to information is seamless, political parties have to become very transparent and clear about their message and goals to ensure that they are not burned at the stake by their own followers.

Traditional media gives voice to these movements, but the kick-off steps and their activity are continued and organised on websites and on social media. Curran states that “the Internet is a very effective mode of communication between activists”, linking them together, facilitating interaction, and mobilizing them to one place in short notice (Curran, 2013:14-15).

This trend towards using new and social media from the electorate as well as from the political parties’ side, and especially its use in political campaign strategies, has only been implemented in recent elections in the developing countries; and in many

countries political parties are still tentative about using new media as a primary communication tool. This is mostly due to the audiences' only recently reaching a valuable size and with that a rise in demand to communicate with them.

In the previous national election in 2009 in South Africa, new media did not have a strong influence, as Marion Walton (Walton and Donner, 2011) writes:

...[an] analysis of the 2009 elections suggests that these mobile social networks did not facilitate political (at least electoral) communication, either between counter publics and a local mediated public sphere or globally with other networked publics. They did thus not allow for broader contestation or for deliberation.

There has, however, been strong growth in broadband connectivity and access to the Internet in South African since 2009 and this study investigates how this growth and thus access to a new audience was incorporated into the parties' campaign strategies with the aim of seeing how new media – and specifically the social media platform Twitter – was used in the 2014 South African national election. This will help us to determine how and what the South African political parties are communicating online; whether they are communicating at all; and whether or not they have used new media well.

Research Problem

The South African academic and lecturer at the Journalism and Media Studies Department at Rhodes University in Grahamstown, Jane Duncan, wrote in the book *South African Election 2014* (Duncan, 2014:153):

...when it came to using online and social media – which should have given the parties space to make their voices heard in an unmediated fashion – the tendency was to use these media to broadcast existing electoral messages rather than interact with existing potential supporters.

She goes on to explain that many of the political parties that were active in the 2014 South African national election did not make effective use, if indeed they made any use at all, of the power of social media and this resulted in their “reproducing

weaknesses from their analogue strategies in their digital strategies too” (Duncan, 2014:153).

There is, however, very little information available that explains what strategy each political party in the 2014 South African national election used. It is thus very difficult to determine whether or not the political parties are improving in the way they use new media and social media, and why Duncan believes that they used it poorly.

This study thus determines to what degree new media and social media were used by the main political parties and their candidates in the 2014 South African national election, and analyses how these parties and their candidates communicated on these platforms and whether this communication was in line with what they were communicating on other platforms. Finally, the study identifies who the parties seemed to target and who they actually reached on Twitter.

Research Question

The research questions that this study will attempt to answer are the following:

- How was new media used in the 2014 South African national election?

Sub-questions supporting this primary research question include the following:

- Which parties and key role players used new media in the 2014 South African election?
- How was new media used; and at whom was it directed?
- What is the relationship between South African political parties’ manifestos and the content these parties used in their new media platforms?
- What should political parties in South Africa do to ensure that they have a successful new media following?

The existing body of literature about the use of new media in political campaigns is used as a base from which a comparison between the parties in the dataset collected during the 2014 South African national election is drawn. From that comparison it is determined how new media was used.

The current body of work on campaigning and the use of new media that is available focuses heavily on the developed economies, specifically the United States, and to a lesser degree on the developing countries of Brazil and India.

Examining how these countries' political parties used new media in comparison with the methods employed in the 2014 national election in South Africa will give us a better understanding of the effectiveness of South Africa's political party approaches.

Research Design and Methods: Descriptive, Quantitative Study

The overall method applied in this study will be quantitative, looking at the how and not the why or the what. *The Practice of Social Research* (Babbie, 2010:52) breaks down the basic procedure for a quantitative study into four steps:

1. The construction of the image of the concept
2. The specification of dimensions
3. The selection of observable indicators
4. Combining the observable indicators and the dataset to answer the research question, which in this case is: Was new media used well or not in the 2014 national election in South Africa?

The first step is the construction of the image of the concept: this is where the research question is formulated and the parameters are set to determine how the research question will be answered. For this to be done there has to be a set context or framework in which to place the concept. The literature study in this paper creates that framework from which an understanding can grow of how new media was used in other examples in the world, and importantly, why it has become necessary to look at how new media is being used during elections.

The second step that is required is the specification of dimensions: this refers to the selection of data and the motivation for choosing that specific data. In the case of this study the data that forms the base of the argument has been extracted from the online

social media platform Twitter. The data was extracted from the Twitter platform for a period of four months and two weeks, from 1 February 2014 until 12 May 2014, which gave us over one million Twitter messages, tweets, to work with. The data harvested was chosen because it possessed one of the pre-defined characteristics. This means that before any tweet was saved to the database it was confirmed that the tweet adhered to the rules that were set in place.

Three basic rules were set up. The first one was: Does this tweet originate from one of our pre-selected political parties? Because the research looked at how new media was used during the 2014 South African national election, only the top political parties that were on the Twitter platform were selected. They were Agang, which is the new political party that was founded by Mamphela Ramphele. The African National Congress (ANC), the ruling political party in South Africa. The Congress of the People (COPE), which is one of the top news-making opposition parties and which was formed before the 1999 election. The Democratic Alliance (DA), the main opposition party in South Africa. The Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF), which is also a new party that was founded by the news-making former ANC Youth Leader, Julius Malema. As well as the Patriotic Alliance, a new party that was formed before the 2014 election by the well-known businessman, Kenny Kunene.

If the tweet did not fall into the first category it was moved to the second category: Does this tweet originate from one of the pre-selected top party leaders? They were Helen Zille, the DA's party leader and the premier of the Western Cape; Julius Malema, the EFF party leader; Mosiuoa Lekota, COPE's party leader; Jacob Zuma, the ANC party leader and the president of South Africa; and Mamphela Ramphele, the party leader of Agang.

The final category was: Does this tweet mention either by full name, for example, Helen Zille; or directly address, for example, @helenzille; or any of the pre-selected candidates or parties. If it did the tweet was captured and added to the database.

This means that what the political parties and their top candidates posted is visible; also what the members of the public posted about them; as well as what the response was from the members of the public to each tweet that was sent. This is possible

because of the way the communication in Twitter works, where tweets are ‘retweeted’. This means the message is shared by any profile on Twitter without adding or removing anything from the original tweet; ‘quoted’, which is where the person quotes, in full or part, the original tweet and then adds their own words; and finally a tweet made a ‘favourite’ by anyone on Twitter. This means that that tweet will stay visible as a list of tweets that a person has earmarked as something that they want to read again later and has more value personally to the user.

The Twitter platform allows for any member of the public to send out a message, but all messages are limited to 140 characters (letter or numbers), and anyone on Twitter can read any tweet that is posted. This means that with the right software in place the entire Twitter database can be harvested to provide a dataset that is readable and trustworthy. The profiles of each of the parties and candidates mentioned above were tracked for the four months before the 2014 South African national election and for a period of two weeks after the election. The tweets were taken from anyone on Twitter, so tweets that originated from outside of South Africa were not excluded. It is also important to note that all of the tweets that were collected still have their original website links so it is possible to go back to the original tweet to verify that the tweets used in this database are real and not altered.

A limitation of this sample is that it does rely heavily on the data that was collected through the Twitter platform. This means that there are other places online that could present alternative insights and arguments that have not been picked up by this study.

All of the tweets that were not made in English were also disregarded, and they have been removed from the study. This could have an impact on the representation of some of the parties, but this impact is marginal due to the high volume of English tweets that were counted compared to the very low number of other language tweets that were collected.

It is important to mention that the reason why Twitter was used is because it has a large audience in South African and is the only platform that has a publicly accessible

application programming interface (API)¹ that can be efficiently mined and accurately segmented for a study of this nature. Facebook, for example, does not make its users' information available to be mined in the same way Twitter does. This means that it is not possible to extract the same quality or quantity of information as that which has been extracted from Twitter. Facebook's user behaviour is also not as readily available to the public. There is no other social media platform with the same audience size in South Africa that can be tracked with the same degree of accuracy.

The data was extracted by the data mining company, Fuseware. They used Twitter's API to extract the information into a database. As mentioned above, with the Twitter API, Fuseware could gather information by asking Twitter to give us specific data on a user by asking questions such as: "When anyone on Twitter tweets @da_news, then save the following information on the database: Name of person that sent the tweet, the actual tweet they sent, their location if it is defined, the time they sent the tweet, was it an organisation or individual, and the gender of the person if it is defined."

Sentiment analysis was also used, which was also done by Fuseware, where natural language algorithms pick up on predefined keywords and combinations of words to determine whether the term is overtly negative or positive. If the term did not contain a specific marker, such "good", "bad", "useless" then it was categorised as neutral. Most posts on Twitter are deemed neutral, because they are not actively for or against, but rather share a information or facts. They did make use of machine learning algorithms to improve the success rate of the semantic algorithms, but even with this, these algorithms still needed some work to improve their efficacy. However, for the purposes of this study they give us an insight into how the general populace felt regarding a topic, political party or person.

The third step that is required for a quantitative study is the selection of observable indicators. This means that there has to be a defined framework that can be used as a scale to measure the data that was collected. In the case of this study, it measured whether new media was well or poorly used in South Africa's 2014 national election

¹ In computer programming, an application-programming interface (API) specifies a software component in terms of its operations, their inputs and outputs and underlying types. Its main purpose is to define a set of functionalities that are independent of their respective implementation, allowing both definition and implementation to vary

by looking at how other countries have used new media and distilling a number of best practices to compare the dataset against.

The final step that is required is to combine the observable indicators and the dataset to determine whether the research question that was formulated was answered. This was done in the data analysis chapter in this study where the framework from the literature review was used to ascertain whether or not new media was used well in the South African national election in 2014.

Ethics

The information that is used in this paper was collected and supplied ethically.

The Twitter data collected for this study was supplied and verified by the data and research company Fuseware. Fuseware is a market leader in online media monitoring, and provides a precise understanding of the online market, competitive climate and consumer insights around digital brands (Reporter, 2014). The data collection that Fuseware did was requested by the South African company Media24, to use in a business document which was never completed.

The author of this paper was an employee of Media24 and that is how I became aware of the dataset. I have since left Media24 to start my own company, but was given access to this dataset by Media24 after they decided not to use it in their business plan and saw no further use for it. My leaving after being given consent to use the dataset has not impacted on their willingness to provide the dataset as a basis for the work in this thesis.

I have been given written consent by Media24 as well as Fuseware to make use of this dataset and publish the findings publicly.

The use of Twitter information is also covered by Twitter policy documentation which every person that joins Twitter has to sign. In this document on their website (twitter.com, 2014) they state the following:

Tweets, Following, Lists and other Public Information: Our Services are primarily designed to help you share information with the world. Most of the information you provide us is information you are asking us to make public. This includes not only the messages you Tweet and the metadata provided with Tweets, such as when you Tweeted, but also the lists you create, the people you follow, the Tweets you mark as favorites or Retweet, and many other bits of information that result from your use of the Services. We may use this information to customize the content we show you, including ads. Our default is almost always to make the information you provide public for as long as you do not delete it from Twitter, but we generally give you settings to make the information more private if you want. Our Services broadly and instantly disseminate your public information to a wide range of users, customers, and services. For instance, your public user profile information and public Tweets are immediately delivered via SMS and our APIs to our partners and other third parties, including search engines, developers, and publishers that integrate Twitter content into their services, and institutions such as universities and public health agencies that analyze the information for trends and insights. When you share information or content like photos, videos, and links via the Services, you should think carefully about what you are making public.

From this it can clearly be seen that all users have given full, public right to the use of their names, tweets and any other listed information.

Outline of Chapters

Chapter 2 presents a literature review of new media and politics. This chapter highlights key authors on the subject, as well as comments and critiques regarding new media and politics. This chapter will go on to discuss how new media has developed over the past few years and highlight the key discussions surrounding this field of study. This chapter will also look at the political science literature around the subject of the use of old and new media in electioneering and provide, through the case studies from the United States, Brazil and India, a foundation to use to determine what success looks like when one examines how new media was used in South Africa's national election in 2014.

Chapter 3 looks at the history of new media in South Africa and elaborates on the use of new media in the 2009 national election in South Africa. This will serve as a contextual backdrop to Chapter 4.

Chapter 4 analyses and links the discussions of Chapter 2 and Chapter 3. This analysis will be complemented with inputs and quotes from the data drawn during the 2014 South African national election. It will also incorporate the political parties' manifestos as an additional source to determine the way in which political parties communicate externally.

In Chapter 5 the insights garnered from the case studies and the criteria for successful use of new media established in Chapter 2 and Chapter 3 will be weighed against the analysis of how new media was used in the 2014 South Africa national election to establish whether the political parties and key political players used new media effectively or not.

Chapter 2 - Literature Study

As seen in the introduction to Chapter 1, the research problem states that there is too little information regarding how political parties and party leaders used new media in the 2014 national election in South Africa. And that in the past few years there has been strong growth in the number of people who have access to the Internet and are active on social media sites such as Twitter and Facebook; and that this has had an impact on the way political parties engage with their electorate during campaign periods. This has led us to seek an answer to the research question on how new media was used in the 2014 South African national election.

To review the literature available regarding the subject of how new media is being used in politics – and specifically elections – this chapter has been divided into six clusters. The first cluster examines the chronology of old and new media in general and the second cluster analyses how the development of new media has generally been looked at in the context of politics and government. The third cluster delves into how new media has been discussed in the field of electioneering. Here we highlight the role new media has played and how it is being used in electioneering; what the literature says regarding its use and how it foresees its use in future campaigns. The last three clusters are case studies, where it is asked: How is new media being used and what is being said about its use in the cases of the United States, where the 2009 presidential campaign by Barack Obama will form a large part of the literature; Brazil, where the 2014 election is currently (October, 2014) taking place; and India where the 2014 election was seen as the first election where new media was used successfully.

Finally, this literature study and analysis of how new media was used in the United States, Brazil and India gives us a lens through which the data that was gathered can be seen with greater clarity and then analysed to determine whether or not new media was used successfully in the 2014 national election in South Africa.

New Media and Politics

This paper looks at how new media was used in the 2014 South African national election. To accurately understand how new media is used in society in a general sense there needs to be an understanding of how the dialogue around the topic of new media has developed in the field of political science. After that a deeper understanding into how new media is being used in the field of electioneering can be reached.

The academic Thomas Keenan's personal interaction with new media, quoted below, is a good place to start when the topic of new media's impact on society in general is discussed:

When I explore the web, I follow the cursor, a tangible sign of presence implying movement. This motion structures a sense of liveliness, of immediacy, of the now. I open up my "personalised" site at MSNBC: via "instant" traffic maps (which, the copy tells me, "agree within a minute or two" to real time), synopses of "current" weather conditions, and individualized news bits, the Web site repeatedly foregrounds its currency, its timeliness, its relevance to me. A frequently changing tickertape scroll bar updates both headlines and stock quotes, and a flashing target floats on my desktop, signalling "breaking news" whenever my PC's on, whether or not a Web browser is open. The numerous polls or surveys that dot MSNBC's electronic landscape (they're called "live votes") promise that I can impact news in an instant; I get the results right away, no need to wait for the 10 p.m. broadcast. Just click. Immediate gratification. (Chun and Keenan, 2006:201)

From this the understanding begins to form that with new media, and the Internet as a vehicle through which the new media content is sent and accessed, be that on a website or on a social media platform, solutions are being created that address just about every need a person can have. These online platforms are also created and designed to deliver these solutions, through the online social interaction that people have with each other on social media platforms, and spreads them immediately by using highly accessible and scalable publishing techniques.

Websites and social media platforms have created a sort of knowledge and information democratisation, transforming people who were once only receivers of information and content into content producers and creators. The speed and ease with

which content is created and shared in today's world was not a possibility fifteen years ago when the web was still a very difficult place to navigate and access was still limited.

Bokor (2014), taking from Pavlik and McIntosh (2011:68), explains that this has created a fundamental shift in society, moving from old media to new media, where a dramatic change has come with how content is received, as opposed to sent: "The types of media classified as traditional or old media are analog, where the modulation of the sound carrier is analogous to the fluctuations of the sound itself."

The analogue, a single signal medium of old media, be that print, TV or radio, has been taken and made digital, where the way it is received and reviewed by the consumer has changed. Yet in many cases the original content creation process is still the same. Bokor (2014) goes on to explain:

These [old] media afford a unidirectional model of information flow from the producers of the media content to the receiver or audience (which is often large, heterogeneous, and anonymous). This one-way communication flow constrains the receiver because by their very nature, these media are largely centralized and lack facilities by which members of the audience can communicate with each other or with the creators/publishers of the media content. Examples of these media include print (e.g., newspapers, magazines, etc.) and electronic (radio, TV, telegraphy, telephony, movies, facsimile, photography, etc.). Jenkins (2008) and Williams (2003) explain that in the age of digitized media, the traditional media are moving from their analog base to the digital world (using the Internet) for their products to reach a global audience; but they still retain much of what makes them traditional.

This move from old media to new media that can be consumed, reviewed, shared and interacted with on a global scale is called "Web 2.0"; and this term describes what is known as the second generation of the Internet which focuses on the website users' ability to collaborate and share information online. This Web 2.0 is named as such because it is the upgrade to the Internet, which brings the Internet to a higher level, where information and content are now made plastic and mutable, open-ended and infinitely adaptable (Eder, 2012).

The Internet has moved away from being owned by single media companies that drive content and information. In a 2006 speech Rupert Murdoch (Chadwick and Howard,

2010) reflected on how “Power is moving away from those who own and manage the media to a new and demanding generation of consumers – consumers who are better educated, unwilling to be led”. P. Eder (2012) writes that, at the beginning of 2009, of the 50 most popular websites in the world, when you look at how many people visit these websites in a month, 24 were user driven, meaning that the content one could consume on them was created by other members of the public, and not editors or writers. As Napoli (2008) argues:

The communications dynamics reflected in Web 2.0 (see Mabilot, 2007) applications such as YouTube, Facebook, MySpace, and Flickr are increasingly foregrounding an approach to mass communication in which the individual audience member operates on nearly equal footing with the more traditional institutional communicator. As Benkler (2006) and others have demonstrated, the new media environment is one in which the tools of participation in public discourse and creative activity are much more widely distributed (Beer and Burrows, 2007; Jenkins, 2004; Kendall, 2008; Mabilot, 2007). Mass communication is now a much more egalitarian process, in which the masses can now communicate to the masses (Fonio, et al., 2007).

These are websites such as Wikipedia, which in one year went from 270 articles to 19 700, all content created and verified by members of the public. The other user-generated websites are the social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter and Pinterest, where a user can upload nearly any content he or she wants and have it shared with their friends, followers or any member of the public that is interested. Social network’s value was first seen in 2003 when a website, Friendster, was launched and grew from 800 000 members to over two million members in just two months. Eder goes on to explain that of the remaining 26 websites, sixteen were merely portal or search sites that link users to other sites, such as Google.com, and that only ten of the 50 top websites were what should be considered “one-to-many, non-user driven sites such as cnn.com or Microsoft.com” (Eder, 2012).

This change from a web experience that was still unidirectional to the shared open platform that was created by Web 2.0 has had a huge impact not only on the media world but also on businesses, marketing, and legal practices. Casey and Savastinuk (2007) explain:

New business models have sprung from such companies as Flickr, Amazon, Netflix, eBay and Apple’s iTunes, and the term Web 2.0 has been used to

describe some of these companies and their business models [...] companies and their Web sites have become more open and interactive, allowing user input and customization and adopting a more open attitude toward information sharing through the use of application programming interfaces (APIs). Content, or information, has become less centralized and isolated.

Music and movies are now purchased through digital channels with millions of downloads and sales happening online daily. Creators and consumers of niche content have exploded entrepreneurial launches into huge viable markets. The Apple iTunes Store has become the world's largest music retailer, and Netflix has radically changed the distribution of rental movies. From online gaming (witness the success of *World of Warcraft*) to gambling, the interactive dynamic works to produce increasingly sophisticated and ever more finely tuned content. This new era of unlimited choice is expanding demand and challenging original ownership rules (Eder, 2012).

Flew (2008) stated that “as a result of the evolution of new media technologies, globalization occurs”. Globalisation is generally explained as “more than expansion of activities beyond the boundaries of particular nation states”. Globalisation shortens the distance between people all over the world through electronic communication (Flew 2008); and Cairncross (1998) expresses this great development as the “death of distance”. New media “radically break the connection between physical place and social place, making physical location much less significant for our social relationships” (Croteau and Hoynes 2003:311).

The writer Castells holds an equally optimistic view on the impact of the Internet on government and politics:

The history of life, as I read it, is a series of stable states, punctuated at rare intervals by major events that occur with great rapidity and help to establish the next stable era... [At] the end of the twentieth century, we are living through one of these rare intervals in history. An interval characterised by transformation of our ‘material culture’ by the works of a new technological paradigm organised around information technologies (Castells 1997:29).

The rise of new media has increased communication between people all over the world. It has allowed people to express themselves through blogs, websites, pictures, and other user-generated media.

Use of new media for political communication has been studied by many scholars and organisations including Fallows (2000); Jones (1994, 1997); Livingstone (1999); McChesney (1999, 2000); Pool (1983); and Schneider (1996), to name but a few. However, the evolution of Web 2.0 Internet applications, rapidly expanding broadband, declining cost of personal computers and Internet access, development of intelligent search engines which make finding information on the Internet faster and easier, and possibly increasing user familiarisation with Internet use, have overtaken many findings of most pre-2000 research and even much research conducted in the early 2000s. Many of the new media currently in use were ‘invented’ or began to achieve widespread use post-2004: for example, YouTube, which was launched in February 2005.

It is thus important to note that when the body of literature that exists on the topic of new media and its political use is examined, and when we take into account how quickly Internet based media, or web media, became an integral part of contemporary society and discourse, it is clear that the conversation developed very rapidly over a relatively short period of time.

When the origin of the term ‘new media’ is investigated, it is interesting to note that by the mid-1990s it had become the de facto term for online content. It first usurped the place of “multi-media” in the fields of business and art, and then spread to cover all fields.

Chun and Keenan (2006:1) comments:

Unlike its predecessor, the term ‘new media’ was not accommodating in that it could be used in traditional media as well as new media terms: it portrayed other media as old or dead; it converged rather than multiplied; it did not efface itself in favour of a happy if redundant plurality. The singular plurality of the phrase stemmed from its negative definition: it was not mass media, specifically television. It was fluid, individualized connectivity, a medium to distribute control and freedom. Although new media depended heavily on computerization, new was not simply ‘digital media’: that is, it was not digitized forms of other media (photography, video, text), but rather an interactive medium or form of distribution as independent as the information it relayed.

The term new media, however, only became popular after a conference in 2005 where the term “Web 2.0” was used. This conference greatly amplified the attention paid to the conversation surrounding the future of e-government and the role social media, new media and online communication would play. But this conversation was already quite active in smaller circles by 1999 with authors such as Damian Tambini writing a well cited paper for the *New Media and Society* publication *New Media and Democracy: The Civic Networking Movement*, in which he noted a visible move away from known traditional media forms such as newspapers, radio and television, towards the new media space of the Internet, multimedia and computer-mediated communication. This was a big stand to take when the impact of new media and digital was still limited.

Tambini (1999) called this movement “the third sphere”. In this sphere, it is explained that communication is unbound from the state and from commerce and that this is a place where free public deliberation can happen. Tambini also pointed to the rise of new independent people creating digital networks by building web pages for local businesses and local initiatives as the creation of a separate, removed community that could discuss any subject without state restriction or involvement. This new sphere of thinking, one that was hard to envisage fourteen years ago, is now a given in modern society.

What Tambini was witnessing was the beginning of the web as it is known today, and it is important to note that he accurately predicted then that this new form of communication would be successful because it supported the human need for social interaction, where “we have moved away from a monologue (one to many) into social dialogues (many to many)” (Tambini, 1999).

This is a very important insight, from a political perspective, because it touches on the reality that the communication strategy that is used by political parties would need to change and adapt to fit into this new manner of discourse. Tambini was also correct in predicting the success of social platforms such as Facebook and Twitter, where the communication that is generated is ‘many to many’.

The term 'new media' is, however, much older than Tambini's article and has been used since the 1960s, where it rose and fell with the dotcom mania, cyberspace, and interactive television.

In fact the relation between online communication and politics has been studied by several authors: to name a few, Wilhelm (2000), Norris (2001), Bennett and Entman (2001), Shane (2004), Hindman (2009), Dahlgren (2001, 2009, 2013), Mossberger et al (2012), Coleman and Blumler (2009), who all tried to state the importance and limitations of the Internet and attempted to further deepen the understanding of how the relation between citizens and political actors would play out in the future.

The main concerns many of these early researchers had when they examined the impact the Internet and new media could have on society, was with how citizens' information would be used, what their participation and engagement in political life and debate would be, and how the communication between political actors and citizens would be managed.

With many of the early researches there was quite a degree of optimism and they presented the Internet as a tool that would motivate and deepen the relationship between citizens and politicians. This optimism changed, however, as most of the later researchers began to focus their attention instead on the loss of control the government would have over information, the lack of citizens' interest in general politics, and the remaining inequality of access to the Internet and thus also lack of access to political information many users still faced.

Writers such as Graham Murdock and Peter Golding, for example, were much more cautious and had a limited set of expectations about the implications of the Internet and through it new media.

This is evident in Graham Murdock and Peter Golding's (1989) work where they pointed out that when they looked at what was being developed then, they saw more market oriented communication and information systems. This meant for them that even though the public would have access to a new and large space where they could make more liberated choices about their lives, and exercise control in ways that would

be both liberating and empowering, this new liberated space and the promise it held would only be realised if commercial forces could be held at bay. This was something that Murdock and Golding's critical perspective, grounded in political economy, convincingly argued that it could not foresee as possible.

They believed that the systems that were being developed for the online communities would remain in the control of the large corporations and government: meaning that even though the consumer would be able to access the data at a much faster pace, the quality of the data would always be tainted by the sources that sent it out and owned it.

This argument of commercial intervention from Murdock and Golding led writers such as William Melody (1989:29) to raise the important question about how one would define what is and what is not 'public interest' when information societies are governed principally by market forces:

...to begin the process of redefining the public interest in the information society, it is necessary to return to the essential functions of information and communication in modern participatory democracy, that is, to provide opportunities for citizens to be informed and to be heard.

Melody argued that in a modern democracy the right of a citizen is to be informed and heard, which meant that even if the commercial powers 'owned' the information and communication on the Internet, they should not be allowed to alter it according to their personal benefit, if it negatively affected a citizen's rights.

This question fell in step with the thinking of the day where the fear was that liable third parties such as editors at established media companies would not be responsible for controlling new media, and that this could lead to dangerous information being fed to the public, which could cause confusion and civil breakdown.

In 1992 Andrew Feenberg wrote:

Individuals who are incorporated into new types of technical networks have learned to resist through the net itself in order to influence the powers that control it. This is not a contest for wealth or administrative power, but a

struggle to subvert the technical practices, procedures, and designs structuring everyday life (Feenberg, 1992:319).

His fear was that through this uncontrolled online medium, citizens would be able to undermine the authority of the state; and that the state would then become a body that would be in opposition to the thinking of the online community and would thus have to be undermined.

Melody, Golding, Murdock and Feenberg's hesitant views on the power of new media in information systems and their argument that it would cause an unbalanced feed of information that would negatively affect the individual were not, however, shared by all.

Guthrie and Dutton's (1992) analysis of how new media and politics could impact on each other serves as an example of how speculative and idealistic many of the claims surrounding the power of new media and information systems were. They did, however, also argue that the introduction of new communication platforms online, called information and communication technologies (ICT), provided no guarantees that citizens would have a voice that would be listened to by political authorities. Guthrie and Dutton (1996:270) write that:

...the technical features and normative frameworks tied to computer-based communication networks could have a systematic influence on the content of interpersonal and group communication, which therefore might merit unique regulatory approaches.

Guthrie and Dutton thus argued that these new online platforms would be important places for communities to engage and interact, but that the government should create regulations to ensure that the communication that happened online did not lead to anti-governmental movements. In their case studies they indicated that the normative framework would inevitably include very different political views that ranged from civil libertarian to communitarian, to the views of those advocating protection of property rights.

He took the argument further and stated that if these regulations were in place then there could be the potential for 'real world' democracy to be translated into online

democracy, stating that: "...the public should be able to conduct meetings in cyberspace in ways that are as civil and democratic as in the real world" (Guthrie and Dutton, 1996:288).

From Guthrie and Dutton's argument about possible regulation to ensure effective communication there have been other writers who have also examined the possible potential of online democracy and deliberation and suggested that, even without regulation or control, the online space created the opportunity for communication between the candidates and electorate to develop from a monologue to a dialogue.

One such writer is Stephen Coleman (2005:177) who noted that: "...digitally-mediated direct representation could provide a basis for a more dialogical and deliberative democracy in place of the dialogue of the deaf which tends to characterize contemporary political representation".

Peter Dahlgren (2001, 2005) also saw that the Internet had become a much more open and creative place than his predecessors had predicted. This meant that he agreed with Coleman on the evolution that would be able to take place regarding deliberation in that online space, but that this would only form part of the greater environment.

Dahlgren accurately wrote that even though the Internet could be destabilising for some aspects of democracy, the true value would be that the public would now be able to debate topics and viewpoints in an open and safe space where any member of the public would feel safe to introduce new thoughts and encourage diversity, which is a necessary element of any healthy democracy. He drew this insight from the growth he had witnessed in online communities such as Facebook and MySpace where people were actively sharing and engaging around new ideas and opinions.

Phillips and Young (2009) were equally excited about the possibilities that the Internet presented for politics when they wrote:

...success in politics is now highly influenced by the online activities of political institutions. On this platform, they can exchange views on the latest political developments or hot topics, inviting the public and citizens to comment and adhere to their political programs. As a potential way of

escaping the “top-down” politics of mass democracy in which political parties make policies with low-level participation or citizens’ involvement, the web provides means for high differentiation of political information and ideas, and (at least) theoretical possibilities of participation and high level of involvement in negotiations and feedback between leaders and followers (Phillips and Young, 2009:88).

It is clear the conversation regarding new media and the Internet has developed considerably over the past ten years, from being quite sceptical at first to very optimistic. The reality of how it translated into actual effective communication by citizens has been less impressive, however. In the past few years the Internet has been used in political campaigns to spread messages, inform and engage voters. But, as Chadwick noted in 2009: “...the use of digital network technologies to shape public policy is generally met with incredulity by most politicians, public servants, and citizens” (Chadwick, 2009:12).

Public interest in politics can be limited (political dealignment) and the online realm can be envisaged as a place to “have fun” and to “pass the time” (Curran, 2012:14). It has been noted that citizens only become active in politics during campaign periods when they believe that their involvement would change the outcome of an election, as was seen in the 2008 presidential election in the United States.

Lax also notes that a significant limitation to online involvement is the lack of interest of the electors (Lax, 2004:226). Even if they have access to the Internet it does not mean that they will spend time engaging in political debate, because most people simply do not bother.

As a whole, it is their belief that the Internet has not fundamentally changed the nature of political action (Hindman, 2009). It only provides tools that empower people to have more direct, constant, and personal participation in the formal political process, if they want to. Besides, as Nielsen (2011) also realised, “mundane Internet tools” such as Facebook, Twitter, and email are more deeply integrated into mobilizing practices in political campaigns than emerging and specialised ones, since its ubiquity attests to their importance.

The growth of network societies online, where there is access to chat rooms, forums and community driven conversation instead of single portals that directed the conversation to the masses, means that the scepticism of a controlled information society has fallen away in most countries where Internet access is unregulated. The reality is that most people are more interested in discussing, sharing and building than they are in undermining the existing status quo.

The same also holds true for the impact new media has had on politics, where the fear that new media would greatly sway the outcome of an election was put to rest. One writer to conclude this was Phil Agre (2002), whose synthesis of research on the contribution of network technologies to participation in democratic decision-making suggests that they are more likely to amplify existing tendencies and opportunities for political action and participation than to give rise to wholly new ones.

This amplification is mostly due to the way the online space is constructed, with most individuals spending the greatest amount of their time on social platforms such as Facebook, Twitter and Pinterest and not on political or even media websites. This means that the way information is found and consumed has changed dramatically and that a new form of content creation has been made possible for the individual. Anyone can be active in the content creation process and the user of new media can stop being dependent on an info-communication hierarchy, giving them the power to find and consume the content that interests them. As producers of online content, the active participants become, consequently, leaders of opinion and creators of noise and buzz, that is, of word of mouth.

This shift has been away from traditional media, where there was a one-to-many experience, to a many-to-many experience, which makes it possible for users to contribute to web-content development, rate, collaboration, and distribution, as well as to customise web applications. This move has created what can be defined as the “participative web” that allows, for instance, for the effective participation of common web users and gives a place to user generated content: that is, to content made publicly available over the web, created outside professional routines and practices, using a variable amount of creativity, and which can be shared among Internet users at an increasing speed thanks to broadband availability. Users that

create content are motivated by factors that include peer interrelation, the pursuit of fame, notoriety, and self-expression. As a consequence, the web is seen as an open platform, enriching diversity of opinion and the free flow of information that otherwise would not be available to citizens.

This “participatory web” does create a series of tensions in the concept of “public sphere”. According to Ingrid Volkmer, “public sphere” is defined as a process through which public communication becomes restructured and partly disembedded from national political and cultural institutions. This trend of the globalised public sphere is not only as a geographical expansion from a nation to worldwide, but also changes the relationship between the public, the media and state (Volkmer, 1999:123).

“Virtual communities” are being established online and transcend geographical boundaries, eliminating social restrictions. Howard Rheingold (2000) describes these globalised societies as self-defined networks, which resemble what people do in real life.

People in virtual communities use words on screens to exchange pleasantries and argue, engage in intellectual discourse, conduct commerce, make plans, brainstorm, gossip, feud, fall in love, create a little high art and a lot of idle talk (Rheingold, 2000).

For Sherry Turkle “making the computer into a second self, finding a soul in the machine, can substitute for human relationships” (Holmes, 2005:184). New media has the ability to connect like-minded others worldwide.

This change in the way society communicates and shares experiences and content means that there now exists a hybrid media model where the traditional channels such as newspapers, magazines, TV and radio are amplified on the Internet and vice versa.

The world of political communication, campaigning and mobilisation has also been affected by this change. In an attempt to describe the current state of the media system, it is observed that there are “interactions between old media and new media, and their associated technologies, genres, norms, behaviours, and organizations”. This

symbiotic relationship between old and new is called a “hybrid media system”, based upon the principles of adaptation and interdependence among actors (Chadwick, 2009).

The hybrid media system mirrors a new system of communication integrated by traditional media and new media. The impact this system can have on democracy and civic engagement has increased as new media enhance and expand the potential of conventional media.

While being recognised as bringing forth the need to inform about everything with transparency and at the right moment, the Internet primarily contributes to the availability of a number of extended horizontal channels of communication and an immense volume of information, which can be turned into knowledge and lead to enhanced freedom of choice, consequently transforming informed consumers into more demanding patrons. Nevertheless, and as noted by James Curran, the Internet did not give birth to a new economy or to a new kind of politics. The advantaged (large companies and political elites) tend to be the most active, and the imbalance is reproduced in online activism (Curran, 2012:13-14).

Thus, new media has not fundamentally changed the way individuals consume content, or make decisions. It has, however, had a large impact on the way communication is created and shared, and this has had a big impact on the way modern day politics is understood and run. The biggest impact has been on the way political campaigns are executed.

At this point, with a strong understanding of how new media has evolved in a general sense and how this has impacted on politics in general, it is important to look at how new media has impacted directly and indirectly on elections and electioneering.

Elections and New Media

After the analysis above it is clear why new media has become a topic of interest in the political sphere: in general new media has dramatically changed the way media is

consumed by the public. This change in the consumption habits of the public has a direct impact on one of the most important aspects of a democracy, the election period.

This section will briefly look at what the term electioneering means and from that will be developed an understanding of how electioneering has changed to adapt to the evolving consumption habits of the public due to new media. Three recent case studies where elections have been adapted to incorporate the use of new media will be used to underline this change. From these case studies and background research on electioneering a lens will be constructed through which to clarify our understanding of what the successful use of new media during an election looks like. This will be done to answer the research question: How was new media used by political parties in the 2014 South African national election?

An analysis of elections and new media should begin by stating why the election period is vitally important to any democracy. Swanson and Mancini (1996) write:

Election campaigns are critical periods in the lives of democracies. They select decision makers, shape policy, distribute power, and provide venues for debate and socially approved expressions of conflict about factional grievances and issues, national problems and directions and international agendas and activities.

This means that the election period, which happens every couple of years, and is a fundamental part of any democracy, is a very important one for any government, and for political scientists, because it serves as a gauge to determine the health of the democracy. The election period creates an opportunity for political parties and their leaders to present what they believe to be the best future for a country and with that a view on what their beliefs and strategies are. These strategies are presented to members of the public who, on a pre-determined day, go out and vote for the party they believe will best represent them and serve their needs. It is thus vitally important in a modern democracy for any party that has aspirations to win an election to run a good election campaign.

It is also important to note that the formation of political parties that run in elections has a big impact on society because it institutionalises the existing group alignments.

Once voters form party loyalties, and interest groups establish party ties, these links become self-perpetuating. Dalton (2014:136) writes:

At each election, parties turned to the same social groups for their core support, and most members of these groups habitually support the same parties. In one of the most often cited conclusions of comparative politics, Lipset and Rokkan stated that “the party system of the 1960s reflect, with but few significant exceptions, the cleavage structures of the 1920s” (1967:50).

This alignment to a political party is called partisanship and is described as a voter’s predisposition to support their preferred party. Philip Converse (1966) described partisanship as the basis for a normal vote, which is the vote expected from a voter when other factors in the election are evenly balanced. If other factors come into play, such as issue positions or candidate image, their influence can be measured by the change in preference from initial partisan predispositions.

Dalton (2014:194) writes that it is very valuable to understand how a country’s voters’ predisposed partisanship is constructed because this knowledge is one of the cornerstones to understanding how citizens manage the complexities of politics and make reasonable decisions at election time. Dalton lists the reasons why partisanship is an important element to understand when looking at elections as follows:

- Creates a basis of political identity
- Provides cues for evaluating political events, candidates, and issues
- Mobilises participation in campaigns and election turnout
- Provides cues on voting preferences
- Stabilises voting patterns for the individual and the part system

Party identification, as stated by Michigan researchers and Dalton, is similar to identifications with a social class, religious denomination, or other social groups. It is the long term psychological identification a voter has with their preferred political party (Dalton, 2014:186). According to the partisanship model, this means that a voter does not consider a political party as a distant, removed institution, but as something that they can call “my” party. This party identification is also formed at a very young age and plays an important role in a voter’s behaviour and opinions in the long term.

Because partisanship is seen as such an important element in determining the outcome of an election and how the general voting population will respond during an election it came as quite a surprise when researchers found that in many established democracies voters were becoming dealigned: thus their party ties were eroding (Dalton, 2014:194). According to Dalton, and other researchers such as Wattenberg (2002), Fiorina (2002), Clarke and Stewart (1998):

Voters are not simply defecting from their preferred political parties in one or two elections, or just in the United States. Instead, across a wide set of nations, the evidence shows an erosion in partisan loyalties – the same loyalties that electoral research emphasized as a core element in explaining citizen political behaviour...Researchers first thought that dealignment was a temporary phase, as parties and politicians struggle with new problems that weakened their support in the short term (like a sports team on a losing streak). However, dealignment has become a continuing feature of contemporary politics.

One of the reasons for this dealignment is the impact media has had on the voters and the insights they have on what can be expected from parties and how parties are performing. Voters used to find out about a party at a campaign rally or from party canvassers, but prospective voters now turn to their televisions, newspapers and other media sources to inform them about a party. And as Dalton notes, while there has been a strong decline in the circulation figures of newspapers and magazines, there is a remarkable increase in the use of the Internet as an information source. Two-thirds of Americans say they regularly rely on the Internet, and that the Internet is the source of information that is most commonly used by the young (Dalton, 2014:22 and Pew, 2012a).

This shift in attitude from the electorate where they have moved from being strongly aligned to a single party to being dealigned impacts on the party strategy that needs to be followed during that party's election period.

Election campaigns can be described as the roadmap or strategy that a political party follows to ensure that it garners as many supporters as possible in order to stand the best chance of winning an election. Since most countries have had several elections previously, this accumulation of support inherently means that there is another party that will lose support. It is therefore important for political parties to also position

themselves against their competitor parties so that the public can understand why one party should be followed instead of another one.

This campaign roadmap is drafted before the actual campaigning starts. The book *Political campaign communication* outlines the steps a party should take to prepare for an election. It states that the best way to understand how a political campaign is constructed is by looking at the initial introduction of the candidates by the parties to the public. This is called “surfacing” (Trent and Friedenber, 2004).

“Surfacing” is where a political party sets up its financial backing, introduces the party leader and builds a political organisation in each city or region (Trent and Friedenber, 2004). The party will then demonstrate the candidates’ fitness to hold office and the calibre of its party members by using the candidates’ past credentials, future plans and positioning to show that they are trustworthy, intelligent, compassionate, articulate, poised and honourable (Trent and Friedenber, 2004). Finally the candidates will be positioned and represented to the public in different ways to display various elements of their personalities and the party’s position on tough issues, defining who the opposition is and developing a campaign style so voters can become used to the party rhetoric (Trent and Friedenber, 2004).

An instrumental part of any political campaign is thus the communication or rhetoric that takes places between the party and the public. In a modern democracy the media plays a crucial role in making the rhetoric of the political party known to the possible voters. As Artenton noted:

A symbiosis of the goals of journalists and those who manage campaigns provides for a good deal of mutually beneficial interaction. On the one hand, news reporting organizations certainly define the presidential race as a story which must be covered...and are willing to expend considerable resources in news gathering...Presidential candidate organizations, on the other hand, seek to use the news reporting process as a relatively inexpensive means of communicating with voters and political activists. Campaigns, therefore, are happy to facilitate journalists in the conduct of their work (Artenton, 1984:26).

The media plays a very important role in making the public aware of a candidate’s position, plans and campaign strategy, but it also gives the audience cues through which they get a feeling for what the more nuanced positions are that the political

parties and candidates stand for. As the researcher G. Ray Funkhouser (1973) noted, “The average person takes the media’s word for what the ‘issues’ are, whether or not he personally has any involvement or interest in them”.

Williams and Gulati (2008) analysed the impact of new media on electoral outcome in their study through the use of a multivariate regression model and summarise that “Online campaign activity is an important additional indicator of candidate viability that is independent of traditional measures like expenditures, media coverage and organizing activities, represented in our model by campaign events”.

Williams and Gulati (2008) further analysed the importance of having an online campaign by determining what the actual impact of online campaign activity is and found that if there is a clear and integrated online campaign strategy then the candidate using it will see a direct positive impact:

This impact remains even after controlling for campaign and candidate specific factors such as the state’s demographic and political character, caucus vs. closed primary, or favourite son status. Facebook support had a non-significant, near zero impact on vote share only for those candidates who made little effort to cultivate a social network presence and integrate it into their campaign strategy (i.e., Romney and McCain).

It is clear to see that no political party in the United States can go to the polls without having a very clear and strong new media strategy in place.

As in political engagement, there are inequalities that can be pointed out regarding the levels of participation and involvement (Shirky, 2008) in social movements. Sebastião and Elias (2012) noticed in the example of Portugal that the young people adhered to what has been termed *slacktivism*, where they preferred to press the *like* button on Facebook rather than take action – even on the Internet where they preferred not to share, subscribe, produce content or engage in offline participation.

The various models that investigate the impact the media has on a political campaign will not be discussed in depth here. What is important to note is that scholars from as far back as the 1940s have believed that the media generally have weak effects during election periods. More recent literature has been more diverse in its findings

(Lazarsfeld and Berelson, 1948:73–104), stating that the media may have a reinforcement effect on voters who have already decided which party to support; but for the undecided, a candidate's image, including their media image, may only really influence voter behaviour in highly mediatised elections (Kuhn, 2013).

This paper is comfortable to support Trent's findings that mass media has a tremendous impact on political campaign communication and reception of the voters (Trent and Friedenber, 2004). He argues that TV is the most important medium that a political party can use, but that it must be used in alignment with new media. Trent and Friedenber states regarding new media:

Without a question, the 2008 presidential bid by Barack Obama changed forever the use of the Internet and Web 2.0 in campaigns. The Obama campaign utilized new media, providing the blueprint for future campaigns. Political scientists Jody Baumgartner and Jonathan Morris call Obama 'America's first Internet President'" (Trent and Friedenber, 2011).

From this section it is clear that there are many elements surrounding the way a political party and candidate are introduced to the voter and that the way media, new and traditional, is used in a campaign is vitally important. The next section will examine exactly how new media was used in three cases: the United States of America, India and Brazil.

New Media and Electioneering in the United States

Understanding that having a clear new and old media strategy for a political party is very important and is especially true for the United States of America. No other nation in the world consumes as much mass communication as they do. By 2010, there were at least 1 400 daily newspapers, with a circulation of 48,6 million; about 11 280 commercial radio stations; and 6 771 TV stations. About 99% of households own a television and 57% subscribe to cable television (Trent and Friedenber, 2004).

There were 204 million active Facebook users and 145 million Twitter users in America by 2010 (statsita.com, 2014). Globally, Facebook has over a billion active users. It is therefore rather tempting to suggest that the voices of the public are

becoming louder and more important as they post and tweet to a global audience, bypassing traditional media and promoting their own diverse perspectives, views and news. The interactive framework supported by Facebook in particular does, indeed, provide the means whereby a debating space in which many voices can talk to each other is enabled (Ross and Burger, 2014).

The influence the Internet, and new media through the Internet, had on electioneering in the United States cannot be overstated. It has irrevocably changed the way candidates in the United States communicate with the public, be it through the use of social media channels such as Twitter and Facebook, where they have immediate, unfiltered access to talk to and hear from their support base; or on YouTube, where any candidate can post their speeches and campaign messages or less formal appeals at near-zero cost.

Regarding Barack Obama's 2008 campaign, Miller (2008) writes: "Mr Obama used the Internet to organize his supporters in a way that would have in the past required an army of volunteers and paid organizers on the ground."

He goes on to explain that this was possible because of the way Obama's team used the new media platforms, especially YouTube. Miller (2008) draws the comparison between the value and reach Obama got through YouTube by pointing out that the videos on Obama's YouTube page were watched for 14.5 million hours and that the same number of hours on broadcast TV would have cost \$47 million.

In his paper, Jim Macnamara describes how new media is used in electioneering by highlighting the way key figures such as Hillary Clinton used YouTube to announce her candidacy for the presidency (Macnamara, 2008:2). The shift has also seen traditional media having to adapt to the way it presents content such as presidential candidate debates. This turning point in the use of new media in political electioneering is seen clearly in the example from Macnamara (2008:2):

Another turning point in the use of new media in political electioneering was a broadcast of a September 2007 presidential candidates' debate jointly by CNN and YouTube. Whereas, previously, network television and major newspapers dominated coverage of electioneering and were the primary sites of

electioneering advertising and publicity, a major shift is evident in mediated communication during political campaigns.

Looking at the Obama campaign, the first thing that becomes apparent regarding their new media strategy is that there was a clear integration between the offline campaign events, the traditional media communication and the messages that were sent out online. The team of web specialists that were hired in 2008 by the Obama campaign executed this strategy. The Obama campaign spent \$25 million on new media and in most campaigns today about 5 to 10% of a campaign's budget is spent on new media (Rowley, 2010).

The first elements that the Obama campaign introduced to ensure online success was to create the correct platforms, a website, an email list and a digital distribution system. Then the campaign added the "bells and whistles" of tweeting, blogging, posting on Facebook and putting videos on YouTube.

According to Kluver, what Obama did well in his online strategy was to inform, get people involved, connect with them, and mobilise them. They believe that "the necessary strategic, rhetorical, structural, and aesthetic choices in Web production are made within the context of the campaign as a socio-technical organization" (Kluver, 2007). This means that the entire online campaign needs to be preconceived, with thought going into the way the digital environment should be constructed, both from the technical side and from the sociological perspective where the users' behaviour and needs have to be considered.

The campaign organisers also constructed a list of what they believed to be the minimum requirements for a campaign website: a biography, issues positions, campaign news, links to other sites that support the campaign's ideas and shares its thoughts, links to social media platforms, donation information, contact information (in addition to email), volunteer sign-up, photos of campaign events, and a campaign calendar (Kluver, 2007).

This list will serve as the basic foundation of what can be expected from a political party's campaign website. In the case of the Obama campaign, however, they did not

stop with the website. The Obama campaign team also created a dedicated social media site, *My.BarackObama.Com*, which was affectionately called *MyBo*, where any user could sign up and use the site's tools to organise for the Obama campaign. Three million users signed up. The site simply states "5 things you can do" with easy to use tools and how-to videos to support any user. The key functions of the site were fundraising, networking and events.

There was also a host of other apps, mobile WAP sites and social media pages created so that the voters could easily engage with the Obama team, and for them to be empowered to canvass voters for Obama. This was done through the 'call a neighbour' campaign, where they motivated supporters to go to their neighbours to tell them about the Obama campaign.

One of the most powerful angles that the Obama campaign employed was their use of email marketing where they offered "A message written just for you". As Harfoush writes:

Email was the most common way people connected with the Obama campaign. Supporters became familiar with seeing messages from various staffers in their inboxes and could follow the campaign through a variety of perspectives: a strategic bird's-eye view from Plouffe, frontline reports from Carson, and messages of hope and change from Barack himself. Subscribers could also get emails from Michelle Obama, Joe Biden, Jill Biden, and even Al Gore encouraging them to get involved in the movement. To nurture these relationships all campaign emails embodied a three-word mantra: respect, empower, and include (Harfoush, 2009).

From the elements that have been identified above it is clear that there were many campaign strategies that were combined to ensure that the Obama campaign would be dubbed the first Internet campaign in America. They made sure that all the basics were in place: from the website to the email marketing strategy, to how they could effectively target audiences on existing social networks such as Facebook and Twitter; and from there draw them into their own social networks and controlled environments to ensure that every willing supporter would be activated and enabled to spread their message online, and offline.

When the recent political moves in India are examined similar trends in the political campaign strategies used by the Obama campaign above are being used by the main

political parties in India This has come hand in hand with a strong growth in the number of active social media profiles in the country.

New Media and Electioneering in India

From the section above regarding the Obama campaign it is clear that the strategy a political party implements regarding its new media strategy is hugely important because it is a key way to increase the party's audience and support base.

Talking more generally about the role new media has played in India, Friedrich Kittler argues that new media was used very well by the leading Hindu party because they have been able to “render the past into an accessible presence” (Kittler, 1999).

This means that because of new media, which is unregulated and open to anyone to create and post content, the ruling party, by invoking a bygone era, was able to restore the past in the way it wanted it to be restored and remembered (Ginsburg, 2002:383).

He further accurately states that even if the secularist parties had believed in the past that a technology, with new media, for unifying the nations was at hand, they were nevertheless confounded by the material force of a communication medium that allowed a regressive politics to be mobilised. But he also accurately states that if the Hindu nationalists for their part assume that with the past on their side the future is theirs, matters could prove more complicated. The embodied history of a caste-divided society could also be summoned by new media, which would set a different dynamic in motion, slow but sure in its effects, and spotlighting the fabricated character of Hindu unity.

In the 2014 election in India the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) swept up 427 seats in India's lower parliament, and India's new prime minister, Narendra Modi, was one of the most active politicians on social media. Mckenzie (2014) writes:

Modi has been an avid social media user for some time now and perhaps this earlier start may have given him a better competitive edge even if some of the

other candidates and parties demonstrated a fairly strong online presence during the campaign and election period.

Over the past few years, a large majority of the youth in India became eligible to vote, with 150 million new eligible voters between the ages of 18 and 23, making 75% of the voting population under the age of 35. Internet penetration has grown considerably at 14% year on year and is currently estimated to be at 243 million or about 19% of India's population (Internetlivestats.com, 2014). In the last election there was also an unprecedented voter turnout with 66.4% of the eligible voters casting a vote compared with the 57.5% turnout that was seen in the 2012 US elections. (Mallet, 2014 and Mckenzie, 2014). These stats lead Jessica Mckenzie to write: "India's 2014 election is being called a #TwitterElection because it is the largest democratic election in the world to date..."

In 2012, when Narendra Modi was the Gujarat chief minister, he made a name for himself as the first Indian politician to engage with citizens on social media, according to the newspaper, *The Times of India* (2012). When Modi held a Google Hangout² session on 30 August 2012, where he invited anyone from the public to talk to him on Google's free chat platform and where he answered a variety of questions about the state agenda, #ModiHangout became a top trending topic in the country. The hangout itself became so popular it took 45 minutes to begin because, as Dinakaran reported on *The Hindu Business Line* in 2012, "By the time the event started, it was well over 8:45pm. The reason; the response was so much that Google Plus reportedly crashed".

Modi also promoted the use of social media as the communication platform of choice during the build-up to the election and after he won. One clear example of this was that he chose to announce that he had won via Twitter, before he made a statement anywhere else. A possible reason for this was that he had 4.27 million fans following him on Twitter, so the reaction would be immediate and unfiltered. He now has 6.04 million followers (Twitter, 2014). According to Annalisa Merelli from the website

² A Google Hangout is an online video conferencing session where any member of the public can access the video feed that is being sent by the person that initiated the session. This means that every participant can watch the interview and send questions while the interview is going on.

Quartz, 56 million election-related tweets were posted between 1 January 2014 and 12 May 2014 (Merelli, 2014).

Twitter put this in perspective by writing on its website:

...in the 2009 elections, there was just a single active politician with 6,000 Twitter followers. This Lok Sabha Election, Twitter became the medium of choice for people to engage in and consume political content. Take any metric: original content generated, engagement by political leaders, user engagement with content, news breaks, influence on political discourse or capacity to set media agenda — it happened on Twitter (Khursheed, 2014).

Facebook also saw a significant amount of online election activity. Katie Harbath, the Global Politics and Government Outreach Manager at Facebook, wrote in an email to *techPresident*:

From the day elections were announced to the day polling ended, 29 million people in India made 227 million interactions (posts, comments, shares, and likes) regarding the Indian Elections on Facebook. In addition, 13 million people made 75 million interactions regarding Narendra Modi (Chao, 2014).

The growth in Modi's Twitter and Facebook audiences has not been by accident. He has followed a very focused campaign strategy that holds social and new media as a key part of this strategy. By 2013 Narendra Modi already had eight million fans on Facebook; on 6 March 2014 he had 11 million fans on Facebook and as the national campaign picked up momentum he increased his fanbase by 28.7%, passing 14 million fans by 12 May – the second most liked politician on Facebook, trailing only Obama (Das, 2014).

Narendra Modi achieved this by making sure that his offline campaign activities were well broadcasted online. This was especially successful when he posted photos of himself with celebrities in India. One photo of Modi standing with the well-known film star Rajinikanth was liked, shared and commented on by more than 2.2 million people.

Modi's campaign also created other support networks on Facebook such as "India 272+", a volunteering programme that used the party's huge support network to organise massive mobilisation through events (Das, 2014).

New media and social media are also being used by Narendra Modi as a tool to assist Indians who are in need or in trouble. During the Kashmir floods in September 2014 there was a period when the telephone lines were disconnected and only 3G networks were working, and the co-ordination around saving flood victims turned to Twitter. As the *New York Times* wrote (Najar and Barry, 2014):

So many messages were surging into Twitter under the hashtag #KashmirFloods that on Tuesday Mr. Khursheed's colleagues commissioned a piece of code that could winnow out those that identified stranded people. He then called the Indian Army—which has only two officers permanently assigned to monitor social-media postings—to offer the authorities a slimmed-down, organized feed that he described as "a continuously updating stream of 'save me's.'"

Using Twitter as a platform in rescue operations was unheard of only a few years ago but this has changed because of one driver of this change, the new prime minister, who regards social media as a central link to the public. Mr. Modi's example has filtered through the system (Najar and Barry, 2014).

"If they see a man at the top embracing this form of communication—when you have someone who is bypassing traditional media and communicating this way—that is a sign," said Mr. Saran, a senior fellow at the *Observer Research Foundation*, a policy research group based in New Delhi. "You don't have to be told more." (Najar and Barry, 2014).

This impact must, however, be seen in the context of greater India where 70% of Indians reside in rural areas, millions of whom live in poverty. Annie Gowen and Rama Lakshmi from the *Washington Post* website quotes Sanjay Kumar, an election expert and director of the Center for the Study of Developing Societies, on their websites: "The importance of social media has grown, but look at the size of the population, the number of people living in villages, the number of illiterates" (Gowen, 2014).

It has to be conceded that the reality of whether the online audiences only mirrored the real world situation is difficult to answer. As mentioned above, traditional and new media content only serves to amplify existing trends and thoughts in society. So trying to answer the question of whether a like or a tweet can lead to a vote or whether social media is simply a mirror of public sentiment is a tricky question since it's probably a bit of both.

Rebecca Chao does pose a valuable argument when she concludes that even though there are many similar trends between what happened online and offline in the 2014 Indian election, that does not mean that the online audience dictated offline behaviour. The one thing that is a certainty regarding future elections in India: "With double digit increases in Internet adoption, it is inevitable that social media will become a must in future elections in India" (Chao, 2014).

In the case of India, social media and new media have played an enormous role in making histories available that were once not easily accessible. It cannot be said that this altered the outcome of the election; it has, however, given the political players access to tools that dramatically improve the communication they can send to their electorate as well as giving them a reach that would have otherwise cost them enormous sums of money. The reality as stated by Ginsburg is that new media can sway the future of India's elections heavily as the conversation around the caste system develops and possibly changes the narrative in Indian politics dramatically.

What needs to be taken from the case study of India is that when a political party identifies a rhetoric that resonates with a society then new media has the power to send this message to the masses at an unparalleled speed. In the case of Narendra Modi, it is the fine execution of this strategy that needs to be taken from this case study.

From what was seen above, it becomes clear that in a developed democracy such as the United States the use of online tools and smart segmentation is of vital importance; but that in the case of the developing democracies which are not positioned to be as smart, political parties need to rely more on the inherent

networked nature of social media to spread their rhetoric. What they need to ensure is that they have a clear and strong message that their followers can share and that can spread easily.

New Media and Electioneering in Brazil

In Brazil the presidential and legislative elections' first round took place on 5 October 2014. The president serves a four-year term and the current president, Dilma Rousseff of the Worker's Party, is Brazil's first woman president. Her main opposition is Marina Silva. Silva originally planned to stand as a presidential candidate under the banner of a new party called Rede ("Network" in Brazilian Portuguese). She needed 492 000 signatures from voters in order to gain ratification for her new party, but only 442 500 signatures were accepted, and as a result she had to throw her support behind Eduardo Campos from the Popular Socialist Party. In August 2014, however, Campos died in a plane accident and Silva became the party leader.

Campos, who had garnered only 8% of the vote in opinion polls, was not a threat to the re-election of President Rousseff (Workers Party or PT), or the efforts of opposition candidate Aécio Neves da Cunha (Brazilian Social Democracy Party or PSDB), in the run-up to the 5 October election. However, Silva did represent such a threat according to three national opinion polls and the election results on 5 October where the results were 41.59% for Rousseff, 33.54% for Neves and 21.31% for Silva.

Following the death of Campos, former senator Silva was selected as the PSB's new presidential candidate, with federal representative Beto Albuquerque, from the state of Rio Grande do Sul, standing as her vice-presidential candidate. Albuquerque is a politician with links to agribusiness, a long-standing member of the PSB and a supporter of the Campos proposals (*The Economist online*, 2014).

Five days after the tragedy, a survey by the respected Datafolha Institute showed that Silva and her party had leaped in the polls, capturing 21% of voting intentions, compared with 36% for Rousseff and 20% for Neves. Analysts attributed this to the fact that emotions were running high, and that this had spurred interest in the story

surrounding Silva and her green political campaigns. Poll numbers continued to grow in the build-up to the election and Silva was favoured to come second in the election. However, as Dom Philips for *Time.com* (2014) writes:

Neves' resurgence can partly be explained by the worrying state of the country's economy. The country is technically in recession, having retracted 0.6% in the second quarter of this year, and 0.2% in the first. The International Monetary Fund revised its prediction for Brazil's 2014 GDP growth down to 0.3%, from the 1.3% growth it had estimated in June.

This combined with the public's perception that Neves is a stronger player when it comes to economic reform and growth meant that he quickly replaced Silva as the runner-up in the election. It is interesting to note that *Time.com* (2014) mentioned the televised debates as the main medium that made the public change its vote from Silva to Neves. "...and Neves was able to present himself as a stronger candidate for change, with a tough performance in the last two television debates. He rode a last minute wave of support to second place".

One way to explain the growth in support for Silva is through Dalton's explanation regarding the way an electorate perceives and behaves towards 'Old Parties', such as the Popular Socialist Party, and 'New Parties' and 'New Party Leaders', such as Silva. Dalton (2014) writes that:

As traditional social group influences decrease in importance, the New Politics (or postmaterial) cleavage may produce a new partisan alignment. Environmental protection, gender equality, multiculturalism, and other social issues are not easily related to traditional class or religious alignments. Furthermore, New Politics issues attract the attention of the same people who are weakly integrated into the old Politics: the young, the new middle class, the better educated, and the nonreligious.

This means that a shift in leadership, as seen with Silva, could see a strong portion of the youth and dealigned voters choosing to rather support Silva's New Politics instead of supporting the incumbent leader. From what has been discussed thus far it is clear that when political parties plan and run their campaigns they need to focus on having a strong new media combined with a traditional media strategy as well as concentrate on how they will address the party dealignment trend discussed above.

New media has seen a strong growth period in Brazil in the past few years. As *The Economist* wrote in its 15 March print edition:

In June [2013] Brazil's elites received a rude introduction to the power of social media. Protests, many convened via Facebook, saw millions take to the streets to air disaffection with politicians. Those same politicians now want to harness social networks for their election campaigns (*The Economist online*, 2014).

The growth of digital has seen the online audience of Facebook in Brazil grow from six million monthly users in 2010 to 83 million monthly users by March 2014. This growth has moved Brazil into the third spot when it comes to Facebook populations, with only India and the United States ahead of them (*The Economist online*, 2014). One in ten Brazilians tweet; one in five use WhatsApp, the instant messaging platform. In 2013, more than 105 million Brazilians, which is about 52% of the country's population, accessed the Internet, according to the Brazilian Institute of Public Opinion and Statistics, Ibope. A Social @ Ogilvy survey of 16 countries, including the United States and Brazil, showed that Brazilians spend an average of 13.8 hours a month on social networks, more than any other country (Glickhouse, 2014).

In Brazil the growth in social media platform audiences is good news for the opposition parties, since the traditional media, especially television (which reaches 65% of Brazilians) is dominated by the president who will have access to around 50% of all of the available television airtime.

This, coupled with the strong growth of the platform, has seen opposition party leaders such as Marina Silva and Aécio Neves focus heavily on growing their social media basis. This strategy has shown strong results with Silva sitting on 1.5 million Facebook followers and 933 000 Twitter followers on 1 September 2014, and 2.2 million Facebook followers by October; Aécio Neves on 1.2 million followers but only 75 000 Twitter followers by September and 2.2 million Facebook followers by October; and Eduardo Campos, who passed away in August, on 1.7 million likes and 61 000 followers on Twitter in September and 1.9 million Facebook followers by October. The president, Dilma Rousseff, had yet to reach the million mark with

996 000 followers on Facebook, but had a large following of 2.75 million on Twitter by September. By October she was on 1.4 million followers on Facebook. (Twitter.com and Facebook.com, 2014). This growth between September and October 2014 shows that new media is one of the primary platforms the electorate use to find out about their and other political leaders and parties.

The younger segment of the market in Brazil is a big target for the party leaders with nearly 80% of Brazilians aged 16 (the legal voting age) to 25 using the Internet at least once a week, which is well above the national average of 47%. Nearly half go online every day. At 18 voting becomes obligatory in Brazil, so the candidates' task is not so much to get the voters out as to ensure the voters tick the right box (*The Economist online*, 2014).

It is clear from the press and looking at the focus that social media has received in Brazil that the new media environment has become a critical part of the parties' communication strategy. But they also realise that their communication strategy should be cross-platform, using their social base to amplify a TV campaign or a debate.

This means that in most modern day elections new media will play a very important role in determining how a party's base support thinks about a candidate as well as how an undecided voter thinks, making it extremely important for candidates to manage and grow their social media followings and new media platforms. This is a constant trend that has emerged in the developed as well as developing countries' political strategies.

Criteria for Success

From this analysis of electioneering and the three case studies that have been highlighted above, a set of criteria for success can be constructed to determine what a political party has to do during an election period to ensure that it can be deemed as using new media successfully. These criteria will frame the research question of this

paper: How was new media used in the 2014 South African national election, and which, if any, of the political parties used new media well.

What the Obama campaign case study above has brought to light is that the organisers implemented a very well thought-out and carefully constructed online strategy where they examined the positive elements of each of the platforms they had at their disposal. They then created and targeted opportunities online and offline where their supporters could find the information they wanted them to see; and empowered them to take this information to their family, friends and neighbours in order to canvass more voters for Obama.

From the Brazilian and Indian case studies there are two more important elements to consider when new media is being used by a political party in an election. The first is that new media, as in the case of Brazil, must be used as a highly efficient communication tool that enables parties and their leaders to spread a party aligned message without having to wait for traditional media to pick it up. Secondly, as in the case of India, new media must be used as a community tool that a party and its leaders can utilise to drive offline events and activations.

The criteria that can be created from the section above, when the question of how political parties used new media in the South African national election in 2014 needs to be framed, are as follows:

- Did the parties create an online presence, through the construction of a website and social media presence that checks the requirements identified in Klüber (2007) above. These are:
 - Biography of the party and the leader
 - Issue positions or manifesto
 - Campaign news
 - Links to other sites that support the campaign's ideas and share its thoughts
 - Links to social media platforms
 - Donation information
 - Contact information (in addition to email)
 - Volunteer sign-up page
 - Photos of campaign events
 - Campaign calendar

- Have the parties implemented a targeted marketing campaign that focuses their communication on different market segments.
- Have the parties used new media as a communication tool that enables parties and their leaders to spread a party aligned message without having to wait for traditional media to pick it up.
- Have they used new media as a community tool to drive offline events and activations.

Conclusion

In this chapter it has become clear that the conversation around new media has evolved considerably and that the Internet has gone, in a very short period of time, from being an unknown space with limited foreseeable opportunities to a force that now commands a great deal of attention.

Many writers were sceptical about the impact an unregulated Internet would have on society, and were very pro-regulation. This approach was, however, short-lived – mostly due to two things. Firstly, private apolitical companies like Google, Facebook, Twitter and YouTube were formed that made it impossible for the state to impose regulations on them. And secondly, the sheer scale of the Internet meant that it would not be possible to control who said what online. Which inevitably lead to the open, free web, as it is known today.

But this does not mean that the Internet has become apolitical. The role of government has never been more discussed than since the cases of mass government surveillance worldwide, and especially in the United States by the National Surveillance Agency (NSA), have come to light thanks to the American whistleblower, Edward Snowden.

A powerful quote from the September 2014 *Wired* magazine Patriot Act special edition regarding Edward Snowden frames the highly political position society is taking regarding the role of the government towards the Internet: “If the government

will not represent our interests [...] then the public will champion its own interests. And whistle-blowing provides a traditional means to do so” (Bamford, 2014:89).

It is clear that the struggle for control over the Internet will continue to take place for many years and that the government has a central role to play in this debate.

Barrie Axford summarised this well when he wrote in *New Media and Politics*:

From the core countries in the global economy to the emerging democracies of the former ‘second’ and ‘third’ worlds, from the top ranks of government and business to the grassroots networks of civil society, political communication is being transformed by global processes of liberalization and deregulation and by the diffusion of new media technologies. Intensifying and unleashing forces of media commercialization and conglomeration, these processes are giving rise to a series of general tendencies at the top level of national politics – altering the way in which social actors and issues are represented in the mass media, the ways in which political actors attempt to communicate with one another as well as with potential supporters, and, as a result, the very forms of those organizations, such as political parties, interest groups and social movements, which have long shaped modern political processes (Axford and Huggins, 2013:33).

This change in the way the media world is constructed has impacted greatly on people’s behaviour when they consider where they should go to find information, news and support. This behavioural change, combined with the large degree of youth apathy and party dealignment in the USA, as seen in Dalton’s work, has impacted directly on the way political parties plan, execute and measure the success of their election campaigns.

In the next chapter the question of how new media and electioneering have developed in South Africa will be investigated and from this analysis the set of criteria for success that was created above will be reframed to ensure that it is aligned with the unique South African environment.

Chapter 3 - South Africa: An Overview of Elections and Media

The research problem that was presented in the first chapter was that there are few analysts delving into how new media is being used in South Africa by political parties, and that the perception is that new media is not playing a big role in the 2014 election.

From this the research question was developed: How was new media used in the 2014 national election in South Africa?

The previous chapter broke down what the literature has to say about the development of new media and how it is perceived in the political sphere. From here, how new media has impacted on elections was investigated and a set of criteria for success was developed, by looking at the case studies of the United States, Brazil and India. This makes it possible to focus more closely on the question of how new media was used in the South African national election in 2014 by looking firstly at the history of elections in South Africa, what the ruling parties and opposition parties looked like and what has happened in previous elections in South Africa.

After examining the history of elections in South Africa, what was written about new media and old media in South Africa will be examined. This will make it possible to review the current set of criteria for success, created in the previous chapter, and refine it to include or exclude certain parameters.

History of Elections in South Africa

There will be few years in South African history with as much significance as 1994, the year the country became a democratic state, held its first elections with universal franchise and elected its first black president. Though the world had begun to warm up to the idea of a new South Africa in the lead up to the election of 27 April 1994 – sanctions had eased and foreign investment had started to trickle in – the doors to the world were well and truly flung open in the heady days after the poll. The country's

shift from global pariah to universal icon of hope and reconciliation was as rapid as it was largely peaceful (Hadland, 2007).

According to opinion polls conducted during the 1999 election in South Africa, and analysed by Kersting (2009:126), party affiliation, which has been highlighted as an important indicator to determine election outcomes and voter support in a country, declined from 1994 to 1999. 34% of voters then stated that they did not feel close to a political party and could be seen as independent voters. This group was comprised mostly of Coloured and Indian voters, but the White and African populations in the Western Cape Province, which then had the lowest level of party identification, were also characterised by these attitudes. The reason for this was that most of these voters used to vote for the National Party, and there was no party that had a similar theme in the 1999 or 1994 election. Thus a party realignment was still lacking (Kersting, 2009:126).

In his analysis, Kersting states that there were fifteen million South Africans that received social grants, mostly child benefits. The rate of unemployment, according to Kersting, was officially 25% and unofficially approximately 40%. The unemployment rate, according to Statistics South Africa, has remained pretty much the same, at 25.5% (Staff, 2014f). According to opinion polls analysed by Kersting, the most important election issues in the 1994 and 1999 elections were the fight against unemployment, job creation, crime, and poverty. It is clear that different societal groups and supporters of the different parties had various perspectives. 88% of the ANC's supporters saw unemployment as the most important issue and poverty (58%) as the second most important. The Democratic Alliance's (DA) supporters saw crime, 93%, and unemployment, 71%, as the top priority issues and 49% highlighted corruption and dishonesty on the part of government officials as relevant issues. Only 17% of the ANC's supporters saw this as an issue (Kersting, 2009:126 and Steyn, 2014).

The IPSOS³ reports of 2009 regarding how the South African population felt about the political party leaders make it clear that opinion was very divided, especially about the incumbents and politicians. Jacob Zuma was the favoured party leader for the ANC and had strong support from the Black voters. On the other side was Helen Zille, from the DA, who had less support from the Black voters, but very high levels of support from White, Coloured and Indian voters (IPSOS, 2009).

What is very important to remember regarding the voting population in South Africa is the demographic split between the provinces in South Africa. More than 50% of the country's voting population lives in three provinces: the Eastern Cape, with 13% of the voters; KwaZulu-Natal, with 19,3% of the voters; and Gauteng, with 23,6% of the voters. Coupled with that the Western Province has the lowest voter turnout (Botha, 2004 and Kersting, 2009).

The 1999 election also saw great apathy in voter turnout from the youth, with 42% not possessing the required identity documentation. One reason given for this poor turnout from the youth population was that they were poorly educated regarding the electoral process; another reason was the inability of the government to effectively implement the rollout of the green identity books that the voters needed to register to vote in 1999. The demand for the ID books greatly exceeded the government's ability to produce and deliver them. Johan Olivier wrote in 1998 after doing a survey to determine voter willingness combined with the percentage of the population that had ID books: "Perhaps the most important finding of the survey was that slightly more than nine per cent (9,4%) had no form of ID whatsoever" (Olivier, 1998:24).

Norman du Plessis, the then deputy electoral officer at the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC), ascribed the lack of participation to general youth apathy. On the other hand, registration figures for voters aged 40+ reached more than 90%. The argument for this huge difference was that most of the voters aged 40+ were involved in the struggle against apartheid, whereas the voters aged 20 to 30 were not, and were thus not as emotionally motivated to vote (Deegan, 2001).

³ IPSOS is a publicly-listed company, managed by research professionals, and the third largest survey-based research company in the world. They study audiences and their perceptions of various media and measure public opinion trends around the globe.

When the way parties campaigned during the 1999 election is examined, it can be observed that there was a strong focus on bringing the parties' manifestos and programmes to the electorate. The ANC focused on broadcasting the message of continued growth and prosperity which was aimed at informing the poorer communities that they were building houses, creating jobs and providing electricity and water to the masses as well as improved healthcare with more clinics being built. Their main slogan was 'Our fight for change is showing results'. This message was focused on their strong female support base that was unemployed and poorly educated (Deegan, 2001).

The Democratic Party (DP), which later became the Democratic Alliance (DA), followed an aggressive campaign message in its manifesto and elsewhere, stating that the DP had 'the guts to fight back' against the government and focused heavily on opposing affirmative action. The 'fight back' campaign was used against the DP very effectively by the ANC when they brought out a range of posters that looked similar to those of the DP and stated 'Don't fight Blacks'. This campaign thus repositioned the DP as a White party that was opposed to helping the Black majority they were seeking. This was also seen in the DP's emphasis on economic growth with a focus on the private sector instead of more basic issues. The voter profile for the DP was employed, white and educated (Deegan, 2001, SAPA, 1999 and Monare, 2013).

The New National Party (NNP), which was led by Marthinus van Schalkwyk, took a less aggressive stance than the DP's leader, Tony Leon. He visited Sharpeville during the campaign period to lay a wreath. The party went out with the message that 'It is only when white South Africans understand the struggle of the black South African to be free, that they will really be free'. The NNP was, on paper, a non-racial, non-sexist party that favoured the provision of training for women, the young and disadvantaged communities. The reality was that they were still very white and had few female leaders in the party. Its voter profile was more balanced than that of the ANC or the DP, with Coloured and white supporters, and Coloured women forming the largest part of its constituency (Deegan, 2001).

Finally, the Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP) ran with the slogan ‘Make South Africa governable’, which was a central part of its manifesto and focused on job creation, crime, poverty alleviation and education. The core constituency of the IFP was made up of Zulu speakers in KwaZulu-Natal. Of their constituents, two out of five were employed (Deegan, 2001).

From this it becomes clear that the political parties that did well in the previous elections were very conservative in their approach and message, meaning that the electorate has become observably more dealigned when it came to the 2014 election; whereas the EFF, with a strong nationalisation rhetoric, did very well considering the trend from the previous elections.

The distribution in the outcome of the 1999 election was as follows (IEC 1999, from Deegan, 2001):

- ANC received 10,6 million votes, 66,35% of the votes
- DP received 1,5 million votes, 9,56% of the votes
- IFP received 1,3 million votes, 8,58% of the votes
- NNP received 1,09 million votes, 6,87% of the votes

A decade later, at the 2009 election, little had changed in the top ranking parties in South Africa with South African elections becoming a battle between the ANC, as a party regularly winning up to two-thirds of the seats in the National Assembly and having control of seven or more provinces. The opposition parties that challenged the ANC’s party dominance in the 2009 election were the DA, the IFP and COPE who had split away from the ANC. However, as Duncan (2014) notes: “... the four previous elections had seen a shift towards a de facto one-party system, with the smaller parties playing bit-parts in the overall political drama.”

The electorate, however, has changed quite a bit since the 1994 election in South Africa, with the population becoming larger (growing from 39,5 million to 51,8 million in 2011), younger (in 1996, 36% of the population was in the 15-34 age category; by 2011 this grew to 44%) and more urban (the population living in ‘urban’ areas grew from 52% in 1990 to 62% in 2011) (Duncan, 2014). This means that the

voting age population (VAP) has grown from 22,7 million in 1994 to 31,4% in 2014, and the representation of women in the registered electorate is at 55%.

In the 2014 election in South Africa a similar landscape with the same party dominance that has become the norm in South Africa can be seen. Jacob Zuma, the party leader of the ANC, came into power after he became the anti-Mbeki figurehead. In 2007 at the party's national congress in Polokwane, Zuma ousted Mbeki as the party leader and thus became the ANC president in September 2008; and then in 2009 when he was electorally voted in became the country's president (Kgalema Motlanthe became the 'temporary' president of South Africa between September 2008 and 2009). Zuma's reign as the president of the ANC and South Africa has been fraught with corruption charges. As Southall (Duncan, 2014) writes:

Zuma made it easy for his critics by becoming entangled in a scandal around the apparent diversion of public funds to build himself an over-the-top palace amid his poverty-stricken followers at Nkandla in KwaZulu-Natal. Although efforts were made to disassociate Zuma from the scandal by devolving responsibility upon unnamed officials, these stretched public credulity, and most of the dirt stuck to the presidential name. In any case, by now Zuma had already established an unsavoury reputation for advancing the pecuniary interests of his family and friends, and advancing favours to powerful backers, of whom the Gupta family, from India, gained particular notoriety.

The opposition parties in South Africa by 2014, with ANC dominance over the last four successive elections since 1994, have gone through a similar trend of single party dominance with a steady rise of the DA as the only real force of opposition. Even though 11 other parties secured a total of 68 seats in the 2009 election, none of them came close to matching that of the DA, who secured 67 seats on its own (Duncan, 2014).

The only other parties that were seen as having a potential influence on the outcome of the election was the IFP (which had been haemorrhaging votes and was still run by the 85 year old Mangosuthu Buthelezi) and possibly the two new parties. These were Agang, formed in February 2013 and led by Mamphele Ramphela, the former Black Consciousness leader and medical doctor; and the EFF, which was an unexpected party to join the race under the leadership of Julius Malema, the former leader of the ANC Youth League who took a strong position on radical nationalisation and did

considerably well. COPE was seen as a spent force and had been fraught with internal problems.

The increase in political competition and stronger opposition parties did not, however, translate into a higher turnout at the polls in either the 2009 or 2014 election. The IEC registered 25,4 million voters for the May 2014 national and provincial elections. The vast majority of the new voters were under the age of 30 years. The youth (voters between the ages of 18 and 29) were, however, still a very apathetic base. Of the 10.9 million eligible voters in this age group, only 58% (6.4 million) of them registered to vote. Of the eligible voters between 18 and 19, only 33% registered to vote. The breakdown for the rest of the population that registered looks as follows: 80% of voters between 30 and 39, 86% of voters between 40 and 49, 93% of voters between 50 and 59, 90% of voters between 60 and 69, and 94% of voters between 70 and 79 years (Schulz-Herzenberg, 2014:22).

The results of the 2014 South African national election were as follows:

- ANC received 11, 4 million votes, 62, 15% of the votes
- DA received 4, 09 million votes, 22, 23% of the votes
- EFF received 1,16 million votes, 6,25% of the votes
- IFP received 441 854 thousand votes, 2,40% of the votes

From this analysis it is evident that South Africa does have a very active and engaged voting population, and that there are signs of voters becoming dealigned from parties such as COPE, as seen in the international trends. There is thus a larger onus on the political parties to convince their possible voters to become party affiliated or partisan. One of the main ways that a party does this is through its use of media, traditional and new.

A party uses other channels to send its messages to the voters. It creates its manifesto as a base document for the party leader and followers to understand what the salient topics are. From this the party runs various campaigns to build awareness and rally voters. Besides the news media coverage that a party receives, it also runs direct marketing campaigns on television and radio, via SMS, and through much more labour intensive channels like mass rallies, personal contacts, posters and flyers.

Mattes (2014:175) notes regarding the ANC and its campaigning power that:

The country's political parties are far from equal in terms of their organisational capacity to run these sorts of campaigns. The ANC has traditionally held a huge advantage over its competitors in this area. [...] its ability to use its own branches and the Youth League and to call in the various COSATU affiliates to do party work, especially teachers and public servants, had been a potent weapon and has allowed the ANC to make face-to-face contact with a far larger proportion of eligible voters than any of its competitors.

This situation was made worse for the opposition parties in the 1994, 1999 and 2004 due to the ban on television advertising. This left the opposition parties with the option to buy advertising on radio or newspapers, and meant that many of the opposition parties did not have the financial means to run a sustained advertising campaign and were unable to reach the masses effectively (Mattes, 2013:176).

A final issue regarding the electoral campaigning in South Africa is that the ANC has an unfair advantage not only in that it receives much more funding from government to run election campaigns, due to its being the incumbent party with a large majority, but also in that national and provincial government department funds are used by the ANC to trumpet its successes. In the 2014 election, for example, "Johannesburg drivers were constantly reminded by roadside adverts sponsored by the Gauteng Department of Health of the number of people on state-supported anti-retrovirals" (Mattes, 2014:177).

Before new media there were far fewer ways for smaller parties to reach potential voters, and the cost of reaching them was much higher.

Old and New Media in South Africa

Jane Duncan identifies an interesting reason why the evidence in South Africa points to the media continuing to have a weak effect during elections: the often highly critical media coverage of the ANC has not translated into the party bleeding electoral support, and the volume of coverage given to its main opposition, the DA, has not led

to ANC voters crossing the floor en masse to it. Clearly, the hypodermic syringe model of media effects, which has had its critics elsewhere, is especially irrelevant to South Africa (Duncan, 2014:134).

By raising the fact that the unfinished business of media transformation has forced South African media consumers – especially those from communities still marginalised in much media coverage – to become critical, decoding and sifting through media messages, and making electoral decisions based largely on non-media factors further motivates why the media does not have a strong influence on the marginalised communities in South Africa (Duncan, 2014:134).

Duncan also points out that although the media coverage of previous elections in South Africa has been overwhelmingly fair, on the whole it has not given voters sufficient depth of information to enable them to make informed decisions anyway. Media Tenor and MMA found in relation to the 2009 elections that the media's coverage lacked depth and largely failed to cover the issues that were of concern to the electorate (Duncan, 2009).

In South Africa the previous elections have seen the press coverage tend to be event-focused and lacking in analysis. There has also been a high degree of personalisation of coverage, with much of it being personality focused. Very little coverage concentrated on party policies. Furthermore, few media organisations tracked delivery on electoral promises between elections. MMA also called out the media for a lack of proactivity in collecting views, leading to the well-resourced parties with efficient communications machinery receiving better coverage. An example of this lack of analysis can be seen in the 2011 local government election where the main issues were around the lack of service delivery, especially sanitation, and the press coverage focused mainly on politicians' statements rather than those of the citizens (Duncan, 2009).

It is very important to note that by 2014 the South African press was going through a very tough period, with advertising and circulation declining year on year. The 2008 global recession precipitated this period of cost-cutting measures in many newsrooms, and media managers retrenched many journalists and restructured newsrooms.

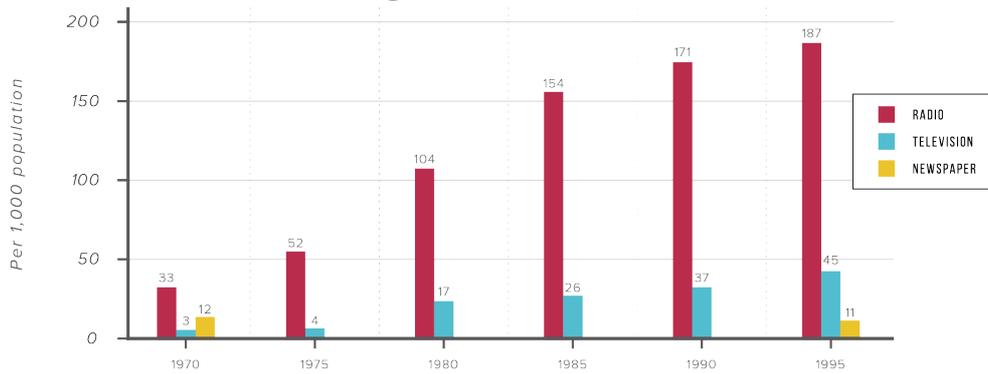
Furthermore, newspaper circulation declined, which placed the press under even more pressure. However, the investigative journalism teams at the various media organisations continued to turn out important work (Duncan, 2009).

In the wake of ANC criticisms of the lack of transformation in the press and the inadequacy of the press regulatory system, a series of reforms was introduced to the Press Council of South Africa. Time will tell whether these will be sufficient to stave off an ANC proposal to reintroduce statutory regulations in the form of a statutory Media Appeals Tribunal. In response to the transformation criticisms, the industry representative body, Print and Digital Media South Africa, set up a Print and Digital Media Transformation Task Team (PMDTT) to investigate the extent of transformation in the press. The PMDTT found that the press had significant areas of weakness when it came to meeting its Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment targets, and that it should set annual targets to ensure that it met acceptable benchmarks.

There can be no doubt that the ANC seized on the lack of transformation for opportunistic reasons, using it as a means of placing pressure on an extremely feisty and troublesome press. However, there can also be no doubt that the ANC picked on significant areas of weakness in the press's operations, which led to industry-led reforms becoming necessary before these areas were used to compromise press freedom.

From the graph below (Otto, 1998) it is clear that South Africa has followed the trend that is seen in the rest of Africa, with radio being the biggest mass medium in the country, followed by TV and then print media. The growth of the Internet has been very strong in South Africa.

Media Usage in Africa: 1970-1995



This is Africa (Barr, 2014)

According to an article on the website *This is Africa* (Barr, 2014), Facebook has grown from 25 million users in Africa in 2011 to 52 million by 2014, a number that will continue to grow, especially when you take into account that Africa has a very young median age. This means that the opportunity for mass democratisation of information, as it is known in developed countries, is becoming a reality in the developing world.

As seen in the cases of Brazil and India, the most important change that South Africa has seen in the past five years – from 2009 to 2014 – is the massive growth in Internet connectivity that has taken place. In 2009 there were only 3.9 million citizens connected to the Internet and the first iPhone came to South Africa in September of 2008 – compared with the 21 million people connected to the Internet today (Internetlivestats.com, 2014).

According to the November 2013 McKinsey Mobile Report, South Africa has a mobile penetration rate of 135%, with many consumers owning more than one mobile device. The mobile penetration rate is the number of people in a country that own a mobile device. Many South Africans have two mobile devices, one for work and one for personal use.

PricewaterhouseCoopers (Smith and Jager, 2013) and Deloitte's smartphone report of 2013 (Casey, 2013) state that there are currently over 10 million Internet-active smartphones in the market and forecasts that there will be 32.3 million mobile

Internet subscribers in South Africa by 2017. According to the PwC South African Entertainment and Media Report (Smith and Jager, 2013), Internet access via mobile devices comprised 89% of the Internet access market (mobile Internet subscribers plus fixed broadband households) and 81% of its revenues in 2012.

This large mobile contribution is in line with the trend across the continent and is the result of a continued period of investment in cellular coverage and more affordable tariffs being offered by mobile networks.

Social media has also seen strong growth with 9.6 million Facebook users, 7.4 million Mxit users, 5.5 million Twitter users and 4.7 million YouTube users in South Africa in 2013 according to the Bluemagnet report (Meier, 2013).

From the analysis above it is clear that the landscape in South Africa has changed dramatically in five years, with Internet penetration doubling and mobile connectivity growing exponentially in a very short period of time.

It is important to remember that the impact of Internet penetration is not only on the direct line between a party and its followers, but also between the party and the peripheral watching audiences, i.e. traditional media and the audiences on social media channels. This means that a party's message and actions can reach masses in a much faster and clearer manner. The growth of social media platforms such as Twitter and Facebook underpins this new wave of open communication and has a very real impact on the public's perception of parties.

According to the DMMA (Digital Media and Marketing) and Effective Measure (Effective Measure, 2013), which are the two bodies that audit website traffic in South Africa, the average person who is online is aged over 40 (56%), is university educated (72%) and has children (64%). This is in line with parties such as the DA who have an educated and more urban voter base.

According to Effective Measure's digital market data for the month of June 2013 (Effective Measure, 2013), South Africa's digital community is largely using ADSL for its connection (48.73%), followed by mobile connectivity (36%).

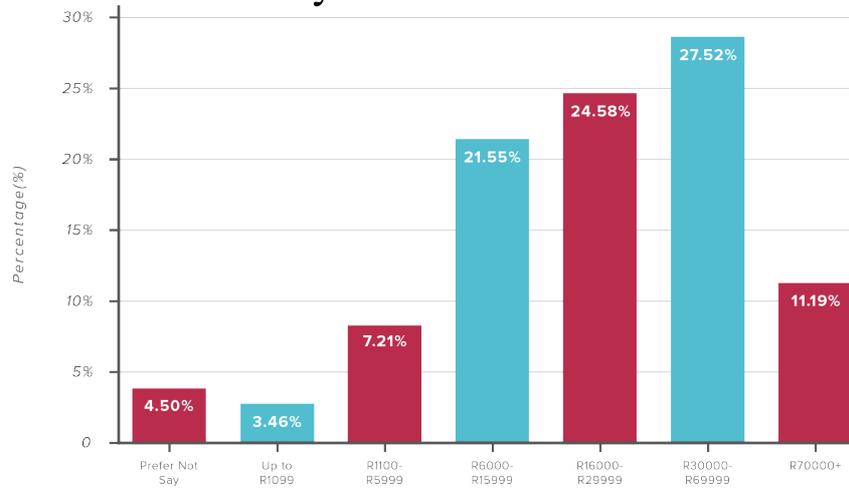
The leading digital audiences are located in Gauteng province, which has the highest traffic flow (+46%), spurred by Johannesburg and Pretoria populations. This is followed by the Western Cape (21.97%).

Reflecting change in post-apartheid South Africa, recent research by the University of Cape Town Unilever Institute of Strategic Marketing shows the black middle class has more than doubled in eight years to 4.2 million in 2012, and its annual spending has overtaken its white counterpart group (Fletcher, 2013). “The growth in this country, both economically and certainly in terms of spending power, comes from the black middle class,” Unilever Institute Director John Simpson told Reuters (Fletcher, 2013).

John Simpson went on to say that the ANC government, which had long focused on the poor masses as its core-voting base, is now being forced to pay more attention to the black middle class, which it has also helped create through affirmative action policies. “They are your enlightened voters; they will support policies, and not just an affiliation emotionally,” he told Reuters. “They are drivers of democracy” (Fletcher, 2013).

However, the online audience in South Africa, when Internet users by monthly household income are considered, shows that it is primarily households with an income of more than R6 000 per month that use the Internet. According to mybroadband.co.za (2014), the breakdown looks as follows:

SA Internet Users by Monthly Household Income



(mybroadband.co.za, 2014)

When the population is broken down by race, there is a skew towards White users, with 49,81%. Black users make up 33.21%, Coloured, 7,16% and Indian, 4,84%. This, coupled with the higher age, income and education of the average Internet user in South Africa, makes it clear the Internet was first adopted by the wealthier, previously advantaged members of society.

When Internet penetration and online audience growth trends are taken into account, however, the conclusion that can be drawn is that even though the higher income, white and previously advantaged earners were first to access the Internet, that picture is changing and becoming increasingly black and younger as the rest of the population gains access.

This means that political players will have to be digitally savvy to ensure that they talk to the existing traditional as well as the emerging markets in South Africa. The political parties will also have to focus on driving a double communication strategy: one strand aimed at talking to the youth, motivating them to become politically engaged; and another strand that focuses on the larger, older voter who has remained active and engaged in politics, but possibly has a high degree of party dealignment.

It is also clear that individuals who have large followings on social media platforms also play a big role in steering conversations online. This means that the political parties in South Africa will have to focus much more on garnering celebrity endorsements or public alignments to ensure their agendas reach larger audiences and receive the most traction.

The final criterion for success that will be added to the existing list of criteria created in the literature review is that political parties and party leaders in South Africa will have to focus on driving a dual communication strategy that on the one hand addresses the new, uninformed and young voter, helping them to understand how politics works through the use of new media and then enticing them to become engaged on these platforms; and on the other hand there has to be a strong drive towards educating the existing older users about the party's fundamentals and agendas to ensure that they stay loyal to the party.

The next section will look at how the South African political parties performed when measured against the set of criteria for success that was created above. This will make it possible to determine whether they implemented a new media strategy, executed it well and targeted a clear audience or demographic. This will be done to determine whether or not the political parties who took part in the 2014 national election in South Africa used new media well.

Chapter 4 – Findings

The research problem that was presented in the first chapter was that there are few analysts delving into how new media is being used in South Africa by political parties, and that the perception is that new media is not playing a big role in elections.

From this the research question was developed: How was new media used in the 2014 national election in South Africa?

In the previous chapters a trend towards dealignment in institutionalised democratic parties was identified, and specifically apathy in voter turnout from the youth of each country was analysed. To a degree, the same was seen in the case of South Africa, where there is a trend of dealignment for some parties as well as there being a large segment of the youth that has chosen to abstain from engaging in elections.

This chapter will look at how the South African political parties used Twitter, specifically, and the Internet in general, during the 2014 campaign period. The set of criteria for success that was developed in the literature review and refined in the overview of South Africa will be used to determine whether or not the strategy that was followed by the political parties below was successful. This will make it possible for us to determine whether or not new media was used well in the 2014 national election in South Africa.

The criteria for success looks at how well the parties selected used new media, by asking the following questions:

Do their websites check the requirements that were identified in Kluver (2007) above.

These are:

- Biography of the party and the leader
- Issues positions or manifesto
- Campaign news
- Links to other sites that support the campaign's ideas and share its thoughts
- Links to social media platforms
- Donation information
- Contact information (in addition to email)

- Volunteer sign-up page
 - Photos of campaign events
 - Campaign calendar
-
- Has the party implemented a targeted marketing campaign that focuses its communication on different market segments.
 - Has the party used new media as a communication tool that enables parties and their leaders to spread a party aligned message without having to wait for traditional media to pick it up.
 - Has the party used new media as community tool to drive offline events and activations.
 - Has the party focused on communicating to one or both of the audiences in South Africa: the older, mature audience and the new, young audience.

To make it easy to digest the criteria for success, each criterion has been given a weighting which counts towards a final score out of 100. The breakdown for the first 50 points is as follows:

- Website analysis based on Kluver: 10 points.
- A targeted marketing campaign: 10 points.
- Communication tool to build an audience: 10 points.
- Community tool to drive offline activations: 10 points.
- South Africa focused to address dual online audiences: 10 points.

The other 50 points will be given based on the overall communication style and the perception of the party's campaign and strategy. This will be motivated in each one of the parties analysed and awarded subjectively. The motivation for this can be explained by highlighting the fact that a party could check all of the requirements above, by sending out a barrage of messages and communication, but that does not mean it was well conceived or executed.

This addresses the issue of quality of content. To rephrase, the parties analysed below might have put all the necessary elements in place to ensure that they are seen as having a well conceived online presence, but if the communication itself – the tweets

and posts that they actually send out – is not well written with a specific target audience in mind, they fail to accomplish one of their most important tasks: the creation of quality content.

The quality of the content created by the party will be weighed by the traction it receives: in other words, by how many times the content is retweeted or favourited. This is, however, not the only measure, as quality, when the items listed by Dalton above are taken into account, is also measured by the fact that the content needs to develop the perceptions potential voters might have about a party. For example, when a party makes a tweet or sends out communication, the reader needs to ask questions like: Did this tweet improve my perception about the party as a whole or the party leaders? Did it inform me about the party's manifesto or its strategy to improve current issues in the system? These questions can only be answered subjectively and need to be weighed in the context of the party's online strategy.

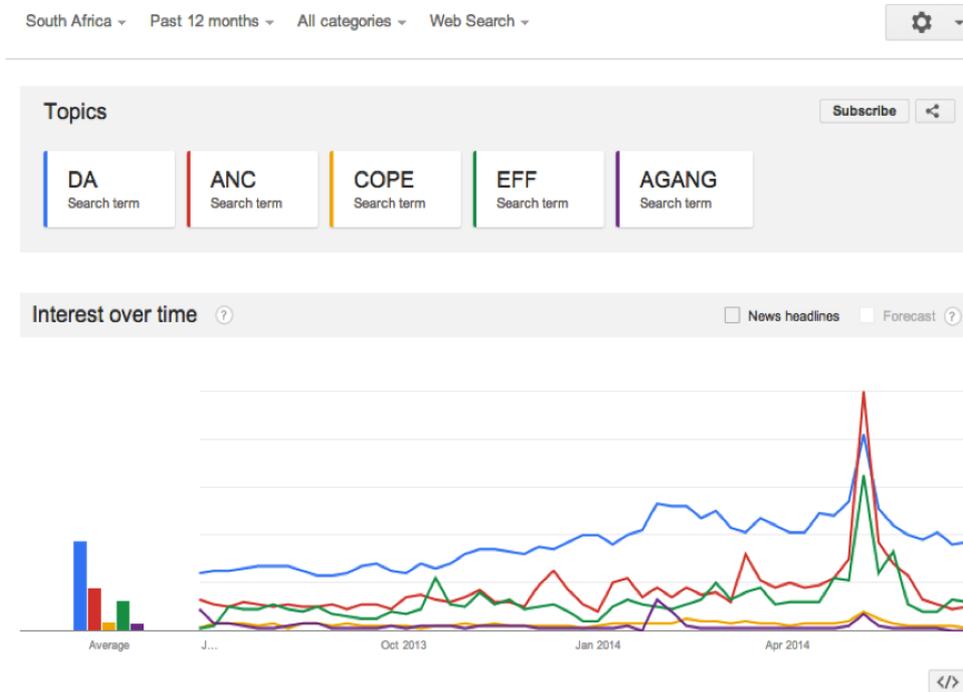
Awarding subjective points allows room to ensure that this study recognises the element of content quality and will further ensure that content quality is assigned value beyond the empirical points awarded.

This analysis will begin by explaining how the data was gathered. Then each party and its leader's online presence will be analysed and awarded a score as discussed above. Finally this will make it possible to determine whether these parties used new media well in the 2014 South African national election.

How Data was Captured

Data collection has become an increasingly powerful and easy way to track how aware the public is of certain topics. If one takes Google Trends, <http://www.google.co.za/trends>, as an example, it is very easy to compare how much content and news was generated regarding a certain political party. Here the ANC, DA, COPE, Agang and EFF's amount of interest that was generated can be compared over a 12-month period and represented in an easy to understand graph:

South African Political Parties tracked on Google Trends over 2 year Period



(Google.com/trends, 2014)

From this it is clear that the national election in South Africa in 2014 created a large spike in interest for all parties on 7 May 2014, but that the DA tracked much higher than its counterparts, the ANC, EFF, Agang and COPE, with COPE and Agang tracking far below the others during the rest of the time. It is also valuable to see that at the end of January the interest in Agang spiked when they announced that Agang and the DA would form a coalition for the coming election.

Such data analysis, as seen above, can also be done through many other platforms, such as the large social media platform Twitter, where a large amount of data regarding specific terms and people can be gathered with relative ease and a high amount of accuracy.

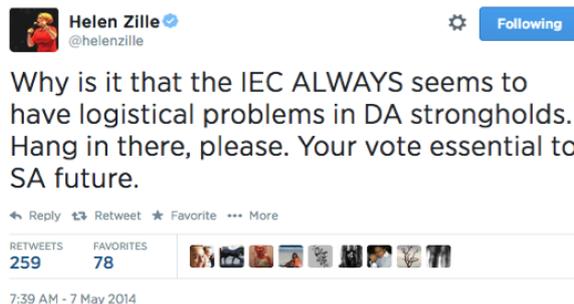
This study relies heavily on the data that was collected from Twitter. The data collection process used worked as follows: All the tweets from the Twitter.com website that were sent by the following political parties and key role players – the DA, COPE, Agang, the ANC, EFF, Helen Zille, Julius Malema, Kenny Kunene, Lekota, the Patriotic Alliance, Jacob Zuma and Mamphela Ramphela – as well as all

of the tweets that mentioned these parties or people, were captured and sorted in a database.

This means that when an individual on Twitter, such as @danielmal (the Twitter handle for Daniel Malherbe) tweets and mentions a political party or one of the persons mentioned above, either directly by using that person or party's Twitter handle, such as, @DA_News, then the tweet was categorised and saved.

For example, on the day of the South African national election on 7 May 2014 the following tweet was sent by Helen Zille, the party leader of the Democratic Alliance: "Why is it that the IEC ALWAYS seems to have logistical problems in DA strongholds. Hang in there, please. Your vote essential to SA future." (Twitter.com, 2014) It was thus captured and saved under the "DA" in the database.

Helen Zille Twitter Post



(Twitter, 2014)

Each tweet that was sent out was assigned the following characteristics:

- The date it was sent
- A timestamp for when it was sent
- A title for the tweet
- The URL (direct link to the actual tweet on Twitter.com or a link to where the tweet was picked up)
- The website it was taken from (Twitter.com, ewn.co.za, mg.co.za)
- The sentiment that was used in the tweet; was it a positive or negative tweet
- The source type, either Twitter, a blog, a forum, a news website
- A continent name, such as Africa
- A country name, such as South Africa

- A state code and name, which can be picked up from Twitter bios, such as Western Cape
- The number of followers on Twitter the author of the tweet has
- The number of Twitter handles (i.e. other people on Twitter) the author is following
- The number of tweets that the author has sent
- The number of retweets the author received for the tweet
- The gender of the Tweeter, male or female; this is also from the Twitter profile and only a portion of the Twitter profiles carries this information
- The type of account; if it is an individual or an organisation
- The profession the person that has tweeted has placed on their bio
- The interests the person has placed on their bio

The raw data is represented in an excel document, and it was thus possible to create pivot tables to extract specific data from this document. The data looks as follows:

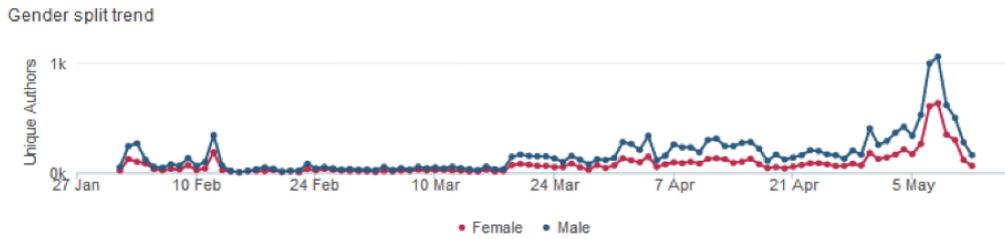
Example Data from Fuseware

Date	Timestamp	Page Title	URL	Site Name	Sentiment	Page Ty	Cont	Contine
		Report:	Bulk Mentions Download					
		Brand:	DA					
		From:	Sat Feb 01 00:00:00 UTC 2014					
		To:	Wed May 14 00:00:00 UTC 2014					
		Label:						
2014/02/01	00:00:00	Eyewitness News: 'P	http://ewn.co.za	ewn.co.za	neutral	news	a-f	Africa
2014/02/01	07:25:01	Neil Rossouw (@neil	http://twitter.com	twitter.com	neutral	twitter	a-f	Africa
2014/02/01	08:09:32	Celebrate Madiba (@	http://twitter.com	twitter.com	neutral	twitter	a-f	Africa
2014/02/01	07:36:39	Ramphele to join the	http://www.baydu.co.za	www.baydu.co.za	neutral	forum	a-f	Africa
2014/02/01	09:42:08	Mike Love (@TheBu	http://twitter.com	twitter.com	neutral	twitter	a-f	Africa
2014/02/01	10:10:24	DA Believer (@Pedro	http://twitter.com	twitter.com	neutral	twitter	a-f	Africa
2014/02/01	11:05:49	Liezel Martin (@Liez	http://twitter.com	twitter.com	neutral	twitter	a-f	Africa
2014/02/01	11:41:44	migalsale (@migalsa	http://twitter.com	twitter.com	neutral	twitter	a-f	Africa
2014/02/01	17:43:35	Sipho Phendu (@Sip	http://twitter.com	twitter.com	neutral	twitter	a-f	Africa
2014/02/01	19:41:15	DA heads to court for	http://www.sabcm.com	www.sabcm.com	neutral	news	a-f	Africa
2014/02/01	18:00:09	SABC News.com - W	http://www.sabc.co.za	www.sabc.co.za	neutral	news	a-f	Africa
2014/02/01	20:36:41	Grant Pringle™ (@G	http://twitter.com	twitter.com	neutral	twitter	a-f	Africa
2014/02/01	06:56:02	Confusion over Ramj	http://www.thepost.co.za	www.thepost.co.za	neutral	news	a-f	Africa
2014/02/01	00:00:00	Ramphele, DA confu	http://mybroadsband.co.za	mybroadsband.co.za	neutral	forum	a-f	Africa
2014/02/01	00:08:26	Pumzile Mpompo (@	http://twitter.com	twitter.com	neutral	twitter	a-f	Africa

(Fuseware, 2014)

From this data it was then possible to extrapolate information about all the tweets that were sent where the keywords, DA_News, DA, Democratic Alliance and Helen Zille were used. Trends then became visible: such as there was a much larger male segment, 63%, engaging with the DA on Twitter; that the top four interests of those who tweeted were from most to least Sports, Family and Parenting, Music and Business; and that the gender split over time stayed consistently more male than female. Twitter defines gender based on its own gender prediction engine, and not all profiles have defined genders.

Gender Split example from Fuseware data



(Fuseware, 2014)

Twitter Gender and Interest breakdown

GENDER SPLIT

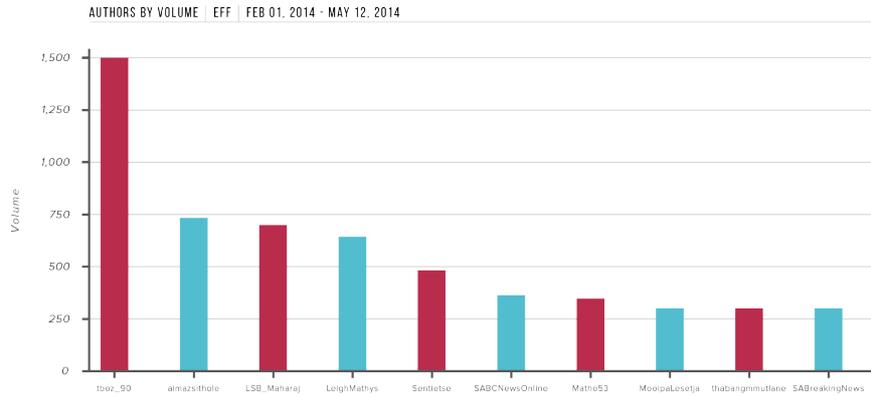


TOP INTERESTS	UNIQUE AUTHORS
SPORTS	2426 13%
FAMILY & PARENTING	2229 12%
MUSIC	2037 11%
BUSINESS	1868 10%

(Fuseware research, 2014)

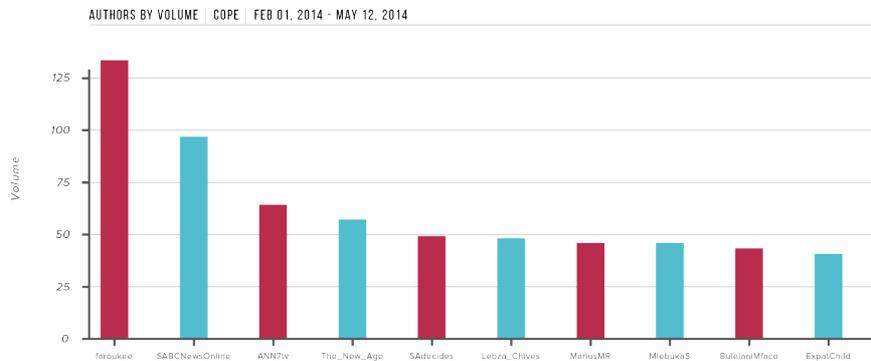
It was also possible to compare the amount of content that was generated for each of the parties as well as who created the most content. For example, between the period 2014 and 12 May 2014, the EFF was mentioned nearly 1 500 times on Twitter. This is much higher than that of COPE who only received about 125 mentions. It was also possible to then see which users, or unique people, created the most amount of content on Twitter.

EFF Authors ranked by volume



(Fuseware, 2014)

Cope Authors ranked by volume

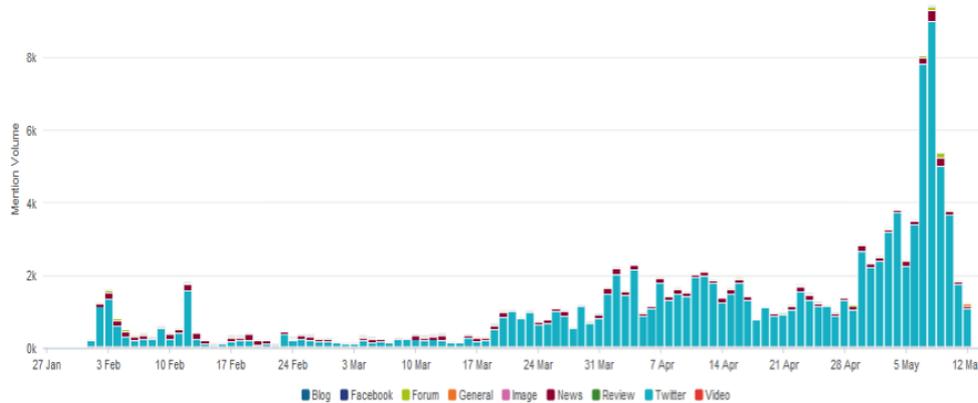


(Fuseware, 2014)

The data gathered also made it possible to look at the amount of content that was posted about each of the political parties to see what media, forums, blogs, tweets, were the most successful for them in terms of content created about them.

When the example of the Democratic Alliance is taken, it is clear that Twitter was a very strong platform for them, a trend that is visible for all parties. Out of the nine platforms monitored from 1 February to 12 May, Twitter generated the most mentions by a large margin. Second to that was news, which is the mainstream news channels and news reporters. After that came the forums and then the other platforms.

Mentions Per Platform example data from Fuseware



(Fuseware, 2014)

This breakdown of how data was collected for this study makes it possible to move to the analysis part of this study where each one of the parties and their leaders will be weighed against the criteria for success developed above.

ANC and Jacob Zuma

The African National Congress has a website that is visible to the public and can be accessed by going to www.anc.org.za. The website is not mobile friendly; this means that the website does not respond to the smaller size of a mobile device and is very difficult to navigate on a mobile device, which is the largest part of the online audience in South Africa.

The website focuses mainly on the latest press statements and the latest speeches, which are available as text articles. After these there are three articles that are written by ANC members, giving their point of view on the various issues such as land reform. None of the articles can be shared on social media or even via email. The Twitter, YouTube and Flickr pages are pulled through, but Facebook is not. Overall the website is in need of a complete overhaul.

Jacob Zuma is the President of the ANC and of South Africa. He has been embroiled in many scandals over the past few years, with the most recent being the construction of a large personal mansion in Nkandla in KwaZulu-Natal with a total cost of R246 million being taken from state coffers for the construction (news24.com, 2014).

The ANC manifesto is easily found on the website, and the document is readable in .pdf format. The main focus points in the ANC manifesto are:

- The economy and jobs
- Rural development, land reform and food security
- Human settlements and basic services
- Education and training
- Health
- Fighting corruption and crime

The ANC Facebook page has 250 000 likes, as of 3 September 2014 and 151 000 followers on Twitter.

Jacob Zuma tweets under the handle, @SAPresident, and has 335 000 followers on 13 September. He does not have a Facebook page, but Facebook does mention that the topic Jacob Zuma is liked by 60 000 people.

From 1 February 2014 to 12 May 2014, 96 000 mentions of Jacob Zuma were tracked online, 6 228 of those mentions were negative and only 2 777 were positive. The majority of the audience talking about Zuma online were male (65%). The top Twitter accounts that mentioned Zuma were @myanc_, da_news and @helenzille.

The official Twitter account for the ANC, @MyANC_, made 1 252 posts from 1 February to 12 May 2014. Of their top 20 posts sent out during this time, there were only two tweets that dealt with the issues raised in the party's manifesto. They were:

“”The ANC government provides the child support grants to support 11 million children from poor households” #Zuma #Siyanqoba”

““The ANC government has invested trillions of rands in the national infrastructure programmes” Zuma #Siyanqoba”

During the election period there were 192 000 mentions of ANC from 1 February to 12 May 2014. 172 293 of the comments were mainly from Twitter; articles iol.co.za posted about the ANC were shared about 2 047 times. The majority of the overall audience who mentioned ANC were male (65%).

In February there were 13 000 mentions of ANC online; the top sites that were used to talk about ANC were Twitter, iol.co.za, mybroadband.co.za and news24.co.za. The biggest peak in conversations was on 12 February with 2 085 mentions of ANC posted on that day.

On 12 March the Democratic Alliance had arranged a march to Chief Albert Luthuli House. However the march did not go as planned by the DA as the supporters were forced to turn back by ANC supporters before they could reach the ruling party's headquarters at Luthuli House; this created a buzz online as people shared the news and their opinions about what happened on the day. The following comments were taken from Twitter:

“#ANC supporters chase DA marchers during #DAMarch for #RealJobs in the centre of Johannesburg. Photo:#SimphiweMbokazi”

“@vasilisgirasis Personally, I feel the ANC is overreacting by bringing the Avengers to JHB in order to protect them against the DA.”

In March conversations about the ANC doubled from February to 32 000. 67% of the audience that spoke about the ANC in March were male and there were 2 313 unique male authors. The top hashtags used in conversations were #anc (2 999) and #nkandla (1 067); the nkandla news dominated online. The top retweeted tweet (473) in March was by @justicemalala who has over 80 000 followers. The tweet was:

“@justicemalala what a week for irony. The EFF leader, who faces fraud and corruption charges, laid fraud and corruption charges against the ANC leader.”

In April there were 70 000 mentions of the ANC and 5 057 of the mentions were negative. There was a spike in conversations on 10 April due to the following top news stories: #Nkandla, #Witsdebate and #DMGathering. There were 224 mentions of Nkandla on 10 April, 132 mentions of the #WitsDebate and 681 mentions of the #DMGathering. Some of the top tweets from 10 April were:

“Gwede just went #Sompisi on @maggsmedia @eNCAnews #ngikuphila #WitsDebate I love Elections and I'm gna vote ANC not EFF (E FELLA FA)”

“I also asked Vavi if having Lonmin guy Ramaphosa at a COSATU CEC meeting isn't like inviting Helen Zille to an ANC NEC meeting. #DMGathering”

In May there were 77 000 mentions of the ANC, 3 132 of the mentions were positive and the majority of the audience that posted about the ANC were male (65%). The biggest spike in conversations was on 7 and 8 May. The top retweeted tweet (553) was a tweet by IECSouthAfrica. IEC has over 50 000 followers:

“National Assembly seats: APC–1; PAC–1; AGANG SA–2; ACDP–3; AIC–3; COPE –3; UDM–4; VF Plus–4; NFP–6; IFP–10; EFF–25; DA–89; ANC–249.”

With the ANC Twitter account being the most mentioned, the @encanews account was the second most mentioned (1 704). Iol.co.za was the top site to mention the ANC, mentioning the party 380 times. Some of the mentions:

“@helenzille By saying that "only clever people" have problems with R246-mill Nkandla upgrade, Pres Zuma is implying that ANC voters are stupid. Eish.”

“Check <http://newsWall.Co.Za> -> [#ANC](#) responds2 billing day [#SouthAfrica](#) <http://bit.ly/1goDruU>”

“Call me a sellout for supporting ANC if you want – Vavi”

After the elections there were 33 000 mentions of the ANC from 8 May to 14 May and most of the audience driving conversations were male, 65% (2 369). The majority of the mentions were neutral and the numbers of negative and positive mentions were almost the same. The top negative comment was:

“@Tebohoeff @_cosatu must just forget,ANC thieves to implement NDP,endorsed by Coleman of Goldman Sachs,the company that contributed a lot to the plan”

The top positive comment was:

“@GarethCliff Congratulations to the ANC for your victory in the election this year. Let's make the next five years the best yet. @mgigaba”

The conversations on Twitter were driven by the hashtag #elections2014 and 3 839 Twitter mentions of the ANC included the hashtag. The top three most mentioned Twitter accounts were @myanc_, @encanews and @iecsouthafrica. The top retweeted tweet with 553 retweets was a tweet by the IEC Twitter account with over 50 000 followers:

“National Assembly seats: APC–1; PAC–1; AGANG SA–2; ACDP–3; AIC–3; COPE –3; UDM–4; VF Plus–4; NFP–6; IFP–10; EFF–25; DA–89; ANC–249.”

The second most retweeted tweet (441) was a tweet by @sentletse, who has over 47 000 followers and he tweeted an image showing ballot papers that were found:

“The ANC and the IEC must be ashamed of themselves!
pic.twitter.com/STwypvLg8M”

The main topics of conversations post elections were messages of congratulations to the ANC with posts and articles about results.

Comparing this with the criteria for success that were developed, the ANC scores as follows:

The website analysis based on Kluver does quite well. The biography of the party and its leaders are available, but not easy to find. The manifesto and campaign news are visible on the homepage; there are links to other sites that support the campaign’s ideas and share its thoughts as well as links to social media platforms (Twitter, YouTube and Flickr). There is an option to donate via EFT or credit card and multiple ways to contact the party. There is a volunteer sign-up page, but the documents that are needed have to be sent via post or fax. There is very little available in terms of campaign events or photos and no easily accessible campaign calendar.

There was no targeted marketing campaign that could be subscribed to or found on the website. The Twitter campaign that was used made it possible for users to easily receive communication from the ANC, and the ANC was active on this platform, as seen above. However, most of the posts that were sent did not have a clear marketing

strategy that discussed various aspects of their campaign or highlighted party leaders specifically.

The ANC could have used the Twitter platform to communicate actively with their electorate. The ANC_News handle has sent only 14 000 tweets compared to the DA_news and HelenZille that both have more than 34 000 tweets sent out. The majority of the tweets that were sent also started with the very impersonal, “The ANC...”, communicating mostly party information and not engaging with the users on issues or statements they sent to the ANC.

The same was visible with the use of Twitter when it came to the communication that was sent to drive offline events and engagement. There were many retweets that happened during big event days, and on occasion when high profile party leaders held events there would be a tweet about the event, and they would retweet a few positive tweets, but there was little in the way of campaign schedules for followers to be able to know the details of what was happening if they wanted to get involved.

The ANC also focused heavily on communicating with the Black, middle and lower income groups and they did not engage with the White middle income, Coloured or affluent Black market. This can be seen in the lack of answers that were sent by these groups and the strong focus on rural and less developed areas.

The criteria for success created above listed the following requirements:

- Website analysis based on Kluver: 10 points.
- A targeted marketing campaign: 10 points.
- Communication tool to build an audience: 10 points.
- Community tool to drive offline activations: 10 points.
- South Africa focused to address dual online audiences: 10 points.

Even though the ANC had many of the required elements on their website, there were elements missing and they did not have a targeted marketing campaign. There were many messages sent on Twitter, but there did not seem to be a clear strategy to build a community or drive offline events and activations – and there was clearly not a desire to include the other groups or audiences in South Africa. A score of 30 out of 50 will thus be awarded.

The other 50 points, which are based on a subjective view of their new media strategy, are awarded as follows:

Firstly, there was no overarching strategy visible when the ANC's new media strategy is analysed. Platforms such as Facebook and YouTube were poorly used, with few posts and inconsistent content strategies taking place. In the case of YouTube, for example, there were posts that announced that there would be a new ANC News video discussing the political campaign every Monday, but that was the only video that was ever loaded regarding the announced Monday news programme.

Secondly, their manner of communication with the electorate was poor in the sense that the ANC did not engage with the electorate regarding any of the statements they made. There was never an opportunity for ANC supporters to ask questions, as was seen in the Obama campaign where there were many channels and opportunities for pro and anti Obama voters to directly engage with him and the party. The @ANCwcape Twitter profile did not engage with the people in the Western Cape to address issues that were province specific.

This is important when it is taken in the context of Dalton's (2014) insight that social group attachments – which are the attachments that a voter might have to a religious group and/or social class – greatly impact on the voter's electoral decisions. The way a political party communicates its political message has to be adapted for the different sub-cultures there are in a society. The message that the ANC sends out to the middle-income Coloured community in the Western Cape has to be much more targeted, focusing on highlighting the top issues that affect that social grouping.

Finally, the ANC did not make enough of an attempt to address the youth apathy that was seen in the previous chapters, nor did they succeed in garnering the possible dealigned COPE voters discussed above. The manner in which they communicated was very one-sided: the ANC did not engage with people who posted comments or questions online, and they did not ask their following to engage with them. This greatly decreased the amount of traction they received online, as well as creating the impression that they were not willing to listen to or engage with their audience. The

ANC might have posted a large amount of content online, but there did not seem to be a coherent strategy driving the content that was posted.

Due to these subjective reasons, and the analysis done in the criteria for success, the ANC only scores a 60 out of 100 for the way in which they used new media during the 2014 South African national election.

DA and Helen Zille

The main opposition party in South Africa is the Democratic Alliance, DA, and it has a very active online strategy.

The DA's website was rebuilt in mid-2014, and is very modern. It is built on a WordPress base and this makes the website mobile friendly, meaning that the content that is visible from a desktop is as easily accessed from a mobile device.

Helen Zille is the leader of the DA and the Premier of the Western Cape. She is very active on Twitter with 483 000 followers on 13 September 2014. Helen Zille also has a Facebook page, with 291 000 followers on her personal page.

There were 16 000 mentions of Helen Zille online from 1 February to 12 May. The spikes in conversations about Zille were the same as those of the DA as the majority of the party mentions also mentioned Zille. The audience that mentioned Zille the most were male, 63%. The top most mentioned Twitter accounts were @helenzille, @da_news and @carienduplessis and the top retweeted tweet was a tweet by @vuyo_mvoko, who has over 10 000 followers. It received 361 retweets:

“#zille on Ramphela: I offered her the world, she wanted the universe, she's ended up with a shack in poffader #sabcnews #morninglive”

The DA's manifesto is easily found on their website and downloadable in a .pdf format. It covers the following key areas:

- The DA's values
- The government
- Job creation

- Small business and business growth
- Land reform and housing
- Education and training
- Wellness, which is sports and recreation, drug abuse and family health
- The environment
- Crime

The DA had 138 000 followers on its Facebook platform and 94 000 followers on its Twitter page, @Da_News, on 13 September 2014. Of the top 20 posts out of the 1 700 that were made by the @Da_News Twitter profile, 7 of them were about service delivery and the manifesto and 7 were about an SMS that the DA sent out regarding Nkandla which the ANC took the DA to court about.

There were 121 000 mentions of the DA from 1 February to 12 May. Of these 6 665 were negative mentions and 4 503 positive. And the biggest spikes in conversations about the DA were in April and May.

In March there were 16 000 mentions of the DA posted online. 283 of the mentions were from mybroadband.co.za with Twitter being the top most used platform. The top spikes were on 26 and 29 March. News that drove conversation on 26 March:

“Zuma owes Sars R16m - DA <http://iol.io/b7488>“

“INFOGRAPHIC: You pay tax. So should President Zuma [#NkandlaTax](#) --> pic.twitter.com/QFEW9tMoj2”

“Mazibuko Wants No Time Wasted On Nkandla Report: Democratic Alliance Parliamentary Leader Lindiwe Mazibuko on ... <http://bit.ly/1ry6005>“

There were 1 146 mentions of the DA on 29 March with New24.com mentioning the DA 8 times on the day and mybroadband.co.za mentioning the DA 6 times. The DA parliamentary leader, Mmusi Maimane, @maimaneam, was the second most mentioned Twitter account on the day. The top trending topics of that day were:

“@eNCAnews DA's big promise to small Gauteng businesses >> [http://www.enca.com/elections-2014-south-africa/da-promises-r1-rent-gauteng-small-business ...](http://www.enca.com/elections-2014-south-africa/da-promises-r1-rent-gauteng-small-business...)”

“@helenzille Take this message to heart and vote DA for the first time! RT @JoeyVenter123: FOR SURE pic.twitter.com/os3YNmDVww”
April

In April there were 45 000 mentions of the DA; 1 811 of the mentions were positive and 2 558 were negative. Men drove the majority of the conversations, 67%, and the biggest spikes in conversation were on 4 and 30 April.

On 4 April there were 2 292 mentions of the DA; bdlive.co.za posted 14 times that day about the DA. The top retweeted tweet on the day with 204 retweets was:

“@helenzille So far, the only ppl who have appeared in court over #Nkandla are the DA, but we won our case: fair comment to say Zuma stole your money.”

There were 2 854 mentions of the DA on 30 April; this was the second biggest spike in conversations for the month of April. The conversations on the day were driven by a TV advert called *Ayisafani2* that was banned from airing on the national broadcasters. The advert addressed many of the issues in the DA manifesto and brought a message of change that would bring six million jobs to South Africa. The video on YouTube, the video sharing platform, has been seen 330 000 times by the 13 September 2014. Top tweets were:

“You can still watch [#Ayisafani2](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rsirDxl8xqU...) here --> [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rsirDxl8xqU ...](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rsirDxl8xqU...)”

“@helenzille Back in Jozi: ANC claiming DA WCape spent R10-billion on consultants. But 97% of that was done by ANC b4 we took over in 2009. Expose ANC lies!”

“@mandyldewaal The SABC bans EFF adverts. The SABC bans DA adverts. This is not a free nor fair election.”

In May there was an increase in conversations about the DA, and there were 47 000 online mentions of the DA. 2 283 of the comments were negative and 1 921 were positive. The top negative comment:

“@KgosiLesedi My problem with the ANC, DA and EFF are the people at the helm of all these parties. Can't trust either of them for shit.”

The top positive comment was:

“@abw1712: @Cohen328 @helenzille DA is the best. At least they don't use public money to improve there homes? Take that Zuma!,!”

The biggest spikes in conversations were on 7 and 8 May. There were 8 023 mentions of the DA posted online on 7 May with 62% of the audience driving the conversations on the day being male. The top three most mentioned Twitter accounts on the day were @da_news, @helenzille and @da_gpl.

The top two retweeted tweets were tweets by Helen Zille:

“Why is it that the IEC ALWAYS seems to have logistical problems in DA strongholds. Hang in there, please. Your vote essential to SA future.”

“if anyone has any queries/complaints about the voting process today, call the DA on 0861-22-55-32.”

There were 9 398 mentions of the DA the day after the elections. There were 1 054 male authors on the day and 633 female authors, with 231 of the mentions being positive:

“@Jo_Cruse DA's fantastic growth in this election is worth taking a moment to appreciate- a phenomenal achievement. The road to 2019 starts here...”

And 393 mentions were negative:

“@ZaMoney_ Im disappointed in KZN thou, hw is DA the official opposition. U bloody sellouts”

The top retweeted tweet (439) was:

“@helenzille DA party agents at the count in the affected voting districts confirm that the ballots were counted. I accept their word for it. Audited.”

News24.com posted articles about ballot papers that were found and this was shared 195 times on Twitter:

“DA ballots found dumped - report <http://n24.cm/1m2oC6r>“

@da_news, @helenzille and @ewnupdates were the most mentioned accounts on Twitter on the day. Iol.co.za mentioned the DA 24 times on 8 May being the top news site to post.

Some of the mentions:

“@GvanOnselen The DA is in a real fight here to cling to 22%. Having spoken to many DA people, they were hoping for 24% or 25%. Even 26%. This will hurt.”

“TimesLive: DA leads Joburg, ANC Gauteng”

“EWN: Dumped ballot papers found in PTA”

From 8 to 14 May there were 121 000 mentions of the DA online; 4 503 of the mentions were positive.

“Let's make Excellent happen... @DAJohniDA @DAYouthNW @DA_News @Jo1Coetzee @TiaanK89”

The biggest drivers of content online were around the Agang and DA coalition and the consequential breakdown it had and the Election Day results and possible ballot paper fraud.

Comparing this with the criteria for success developed above, it is important to begin by stating that the DA had a much more integrated and well thought out campaign strategy online than the ANC. Their platforms communicated with each other, and were much more user friendly than that of the ANC.

The www.da.org.za website is well designed and modern with the biography of the party and the leaders easy to find and easy to email or share on social media. The manifesto and main party issues are also well placed at the top of the page and easy to identify.

Campaign news is also readily available on the website, and there is a special section created to educate users on the 2014 campaign. The DA also put a lot of focus on the campaign by creating a separate website called, lookingforwardto.co.za. This site was dedicated to the 2014 campaign and had useful tools, contact information, a Twitter

stream where users' tweets were linked live. One of the smarter things on the dedicated website was the "free supporter's toolkit", which was a collection of downloadable Facebook and Twitter friendly images that had messages such as: "I'm #lookingforwardto a government that delivers". The campaign pages also contained many videos, photos and a campaign calendar that made users feel involved and informed about the campaign.

Links to other sites that support the campaign's ideas and share its thoughts were also found on various pages on the website with links to social media platforms found on nearly all pages on the site. Donation information, contact information and the volunteer sign-up page is also well designed, and can, in the case of the sign-up page, be completed digitally.

The DA were also very active when it came to building their communities online, with both the @Da_News and @Helenzille actively engaging with users regarding a wide range of subjects. This is one of the reasons behind the large followings the DA enjoys on new media platforms. They also made it easy to subscribe to the DA Newsletter, which regularly sent out communication regarding the campaign and highlighted other important party related news.

Offline events were also supported with online communication; when there was a rally or an event held by the DA, or a protest as seen above in Johannesburg, the DA would tweet and post on Facebook about the event.

Due to the diverse gender and race profile the DA enjoys, the communication that was sent out during the election reached, at various times, the different audiences in South Africa.

The criteria for success created above listed the following requirements:

- Website analysis based on Kluver: 10 points.
- A targeted marketing campaign: 10 points.
- Communication tool to build an audience: 10 points.
- Community tool to drive offline activations: 10 points.
- South Africa focused to address dual online audiences: 10 points.

The DA did very well when compared to the criteria for success listed above. They had a strong new media strategy that was supported with modern online platforms. They ensured that there was a consistent message and executed their strategy well. And managed to spread their message across the spectrum found in South Africa. A score of 45 out of 50 will thus be awarded, as they lose points for not having a stronger targeted communication strategy to motivate the youth to vote.

The other 50 points, which are based on a subjective view of their new media strategy, are awarded as follows:

Firstly, there is a clear overarching strategy visible when the DA's new media strategy is analysed. Platforms such as Facebook, Twitter and YouTube were used well and integrated with each other. Campaign videos, with Mmusi Maimane, were posted on YouTube; these were linked to their website, and then shared on Facebook and Twitter.

Secondly, their manner of communication with the electorate was efficient and constant. The failed Agang coalition and the communication regarding this part of the campaign trail was, however, extremely poorly managed and could have been dealt with better. The incidents where Helen Zille also posted comments on Twitter that created negative sentiment regarding the party could have been avoided.

The social grouping representation (Dalton, 2014) is a big problem for the DA. The legacy of Tony Leon's liberal white party has been broken down, but the DA still struggles to make inroads into the Black communities in the rest of the country. There was an evident attempt to tackle this problem by running an active Gauteng campaign where they held events that were well broadcasted onto new media platforms. These events, and the targeted communication campaign were all overshadowed, however, by the 'White party' stigma that still exists. With Helen Zille as the party leader the issues around race and apartheid will always make it hard for the DA to win over the Black, non Western Cape, voters.

Finally, the DA did not make enough of an attempt to address youth apathy and instead focused on converting existing ANC supporters from outside of the Western

Cape to the DA. There should have been a stronger focus from the DA in the Western Cape to address voter apathy as this is the DA's stronghold and one of the provinces with the highest amount of voter apathy.

Due to these subjective reasons, and the analysis done in the criteria for success, the DA scores a 70 out of 100 for the way in which they used new media during the 2014 South African national election.

EFF and Julius Malema

The Economic Freedom Fighters, EFF, is a new party that was founded in July 2013 and ran for the first time in the 2014 election. The party founder and leader, Julius Malema, was a forceful president of the ANC Youth League from 2008 to 2012 but was expelled from the party in 2013. He is a well known newsmaker who holds very strong Communist beliefs and has a staunch rural following in South Africa.

The EFF has a mobile responsive website that works well on mobile devices. The website has a large image at the top where the manifesto is very visible. A tactic that the EFF employed very well online was the ordering of merchandise, where they made it possible to order EFF branded items such as berets, caps, golf T-shirts, round-neck T-shirts and magnetic stickers. These items can only be bought in large volumes of 100+.

Malema has a strong online following, with 526 000 followers on Twitter, but he does not have a Facebook page.

There were 38 000 mentions of Malema online from 1 February to 12 May 2014 and Twitter was the top most used platform to talk about Malema. Only 2 071 mentions of the 38 000 were negative comments about Malema.

On 4 May when members gathered at the Lucas Moripe Stadium in Atteridgeville for the EFF's #TshelaThupa rally, conversations about Malema spiked with over 3 500 mentions of him. Some of the comments are:

“@loyisogola Malema is a bankrupt man telling us about managing a country's finances. This dude has lost his mind. Sort out your own finance first.”

“Julius Malema is headed for Parliament. At this point the EFF have 103 575 votes which translates into 2 seats so far”

“No suits and ties for EFF”

“#Malema: Helen Zille is a racist. When they march it's black people. When they go have dinner, it's white people. #TshelaThupa”

The EFF manifesto highlights the following in its paper:

- Land expropriation without compensation for development, land and agrarian reform
- Nationalisation of mines
- Black Economic Empowerment and Affirmative Action
- Education and Training
- Healthcare
- Housing, Sanitation, Roads and Transport
- Safety and Security
- Youth Development
- Social Grants
- Fighting Corruption
- Adequate Salaries and Working Conditions for all Public Servants
- One Capital City for South Africa.

The EFF has 50 000 Followers on Twitter on 13 September and tweets under the handle, @EconFreedomZA. They have 94 000 likes on their Facebook page. The EFF also brought out a YouTube video that attracted 209 000 views. The video does not discuss any political issues or make promises; it shines a light on the Marikana massacre where many mine workers were shot by the police and the Nkandla corruption of Jacob Zuma and the ANC (Staff, 2014h).

The EFF had 70 000 mentions online from 1 February to 12 May. 3 317 of the comments were negative and 65% of the audience that posted about EFF online during that period were male. The top negative post:

“@LindiMazibuko @MbalulaFikile he is sad because an intelligent young lady is leaving parli and they're now going to deal will fools from EFF”

There were three spikes in conversations about the EFF in April. 23 000 mentions of EFF were posted in April and 1 294 of the mentions were negative. On 3 April the #702ElectionDebate took place and there were over 400 comments that mentioned the EFF on the day:

“Harris wants to tackle the tripartite alliance. He may be referring to Mmusi, Lindiwe and Helen. #702ElectionDebate #VoteEFF”

Another trend on the day was the #YLManifestos which consisted of only 16 mentions of EFF:

“What does the @EconFreedomZA manifesto say about economic activity? #YLManifestos pic.twitter.com/tWKgwoQXyK”

There were different conversations on 10 April and these were the trends that stood out:

“A trust has been launched to collect funds to settle EFF leader Julius Malema's R16-million Sars bill”

“EFF member Wiekus Kotze arrested”

“Its clear now that Irvin Jim is a fighter at heart, its only a matter of time we welcome him in his rightful home, EFF. #DMGathering”

On 22 April there were over a thousand mentions of the EFF; conversations were about the banned EFF advert:

“@SABreakingNews: Icasal receives EFF advert complaint <http://bit.ly/1fIDtDo>”

“@SABreakingNews: Banned EFF ad goes viral: The EFF's TV advert that was banned from SABC has gone viral onlin... <http://bit.ly/1txuTuq>”

There were 2 218 mentions of EFF posted online on 29 April. 73% of the audience that mentioned EFF on the day were male and 27% were female. @power987news was the second most mentioned Twitter account on the day, mentioning EFF in 20 tweets and being retweeted 177 times. The EFF Twitter account was the top most mentioned with 487 mentions.

“Hundreds of Economic Freedom Fighters’ supporters crowded Empire Road in Parktown, Johannesburg, ahead of their planned march to the SABC”

There were 36 000 mentions of EFF online from 1 May to 12 May. 34 504 of the conversations took place on Twitter; iol.co.za posted 147 times about EFF.

On 7 May there were 4 856 mentions of EFF online; mybroadband.co.za was the second most active site and mentioned the EFF 22 times. Twitter was the most active with 4 691 mentions. 66% of the audience talking about EFF 7 May were male authors. @news24 was the third most mentioned account when talking about EFF on Twitter with the EFF account and @julius_s_malema being first and second.

Some of the comments:

“The first results are in; our database should be live on all platforms shortly. ANC: 148, APC: 1, DA: 3, EFF: 5, PAC: 1, UDM: 2”

“A voting station opened 30 mins late in Sterkspruit after an EFF agent found ballot boxes full of ballot papers. @Dispatch_DD #ddvote14”

There were 19 000 mentions of EFF online with 922 positive mentions after the elections. The majority of the mentions were on 8 May with over 8 000 mentions online; 352 comments were positive with the top ones being:

“Real winner in the elections it must be said is @Julius_S_Malema and his @EconFreedomZA think they surprised us all, job well done Fighters”.

“A beautiful piece by Fighter Ziyana on choosing EFF <http://mg.co.za/article/2014-05-07-soapbox-a-personal-tale-of-virginity-and-heartbreak...>”

“EFF donates R50 000 to Marikana Strike Fund. today kwaLanga EFF stops eviction of family from their house by greedy banks and DA. Asijiki”

“EFF have done well, they must chin up - they didnt embarass themselves. Wrestling away power is a marathon... #Elections2014”

These were some of negative mentions:

“I'm not surprised dat EFF got an appalling 3 percent nationally after making so much noise but they will learn that insults don't win voters”

“Lol lmao...cope failed too, that's not a first time.”@NkanyeziKubheka: LOL RT @Khule101: Suddenly no one supports #EFF on my TL.....”

“We can identify how many village idiots we have in SA just by counting all the EFF votes. #humanityfail #Elections2014”

Comparing this with the criteria for success developed above, it is important to begin by stating that the EFF had a much more integrated and well thought out campaign strategy online than the ANC. Their platforms communicated with each other, and were much more user friendly than that of the ANC.

The effighters.org.za website is well designed and modern with the biography of the party easily accessible in the ‘about us’ section on the website. The party leaders’ information is not, however, very detailed, with only the name, surname and role in the party listed on the website. This is quite an oversight when the fact that the EFF is built around the Julius Malema brand is considered. The manifesto and main party issues are also well placed at the top of the page and easy to identify, but these are not shareable on social media.

Campaign news is also readily available on the website, but there is no dedicated campaign section to educate possible voters on where campaign events will take place. One of the smarter things on the website is the free downloadable “Jazz Hour” which is a collection of downloadable MP3s for anyone to download and share. This unique content meant that those who were not necessarily interested in the EFF were also exposed to their website, message and party because they went to the website to find the free, downloadable music.

Links to other sites that support the campaign’s ideas and share its thoughts were also found on various pages on the website with links to social media platforms found on some pages on the website. Donation information, contact information and the volunteer sign-up page is well designed, and can, in the case of the sign-up page, be completed digitally.

The EFF were also active when it came to building their communities online, but there is no clear communication strategy across the platforms or between the profiles. Julius Malema eclipses his party's Twitter following, and even his inactive Facebook page has nearly 100 000 more followers than that of the official EFF Facebook page. There is a lot of room for them to improve on this front. There is also no newsletter or targeted email campaign strategy visible.

Offline events, however, are well supported with online communication, where most media events and campaign activities are posted online with pictures and even videos in some cases.

The criteria for success created above listed the following requirements:

- Website analysis based on Kluver: 10 points.
- A targeted marketing campaign: 10 points.
- Communication tool to build an audience: 10 points.
- Community tool to drive offline activations: 10 points.
- South Africa focused to address dual online audiences: 10 points.

The EFF did well when compared to the criteria for success listed above. They had a new media strategy that was supported with modern online platforms. They did not, however, ensure that there was a consistent message and were very reactive when it came to posting content. There was also a very strong drive towards the lower income and rural audience in South Africa, and this did not talk to the multiple possible audience discussed above. A score of 20 out of 50 will thus be awarded.

The other 50 points, which are based on a subjective view of their new media strategy, are awarded as follows:

Firstly, there was no clear overarching strategy visible when the EFF's new media strategy is analysed. Platforms such as Facebook, Twitter and YouTube were used, and Julius Malema's strong following was actively engaged to drive audiences to the various other platforms, but it was not well integrated. Campaign videos, with Julius Malema, were posted on YouTube, and this was linked to their website, but it was not often shared on Facebook and Twitter. The production quality was low and the campaign messages were poorly executed.

Secondly, their manner of communication with the electorate could have been improved. The rallies and offline events, as well as the many other media events that were held, could have been moved online and discussed by the party to ensure that these events received more amplification, as seen above.

What is important to note is that when the EFF is considered within the framework of social groups they did succeed in driving a directed campaign strategy that spoke clearly to the poor and lower income Black voters who were dealigned from COPE and IFP, but were too conservative to vote for the DA or one of the other opposition parties.

Thus, the EFF, out of all the parties listed here, did the most to address youth apathy and focus on converting unaligned or dealigned COPE supporters from the rural areas to their party. The informal and seemingly unplanned new media strategy followed by the EFF must appeal to the youth as there are many younger voices sharing and engaging with the EFF on their Facebook and Twitter profiles.

Due to these subjective reasons, and the analysis done in the criteria for success, the EFF scores a 50 out of 100 for the way in which they used new media during the 2014 South African national election.

COPE and Mosiuoa Lekota

The Congress of the People (COPE) is a party that was formed before the previous 1999 election and had very high profile leaders. The COPE website is found at congressofthepeople.org.za

Mosiuoa Lekota has been the leader of COPE since 2008. His Facebook page has 674 followers and he has 5 147 followers on Twitter.

There were 2 989 mentions of Mosiuoa Lekota from 1 February to 12 May. 7% of mentions of Mosiuoa Lekota were negative and he was mentioned specifically

because he said publicly that he would eat his hat if he garnered fewer votes in the 2014 election than he did in 2009:

“@ewnreporter #Elections2014 Cope Pres Mosiua Lekota eats his hat after his party failed to garner the same votes it did in 2009.LN”

The hashtag #lekota was used 37 times in conversations and @terrorlekota was mentioned 681 times on Twitter; 299 of the mentions were retweets.

On 28 April @GarethCliff retweeted a tweet that mentioned Lekota, Gareth has 641 897 followers:

“@ChristineQuanta Now that Smuts quit COPE can the last man standing (Lekota) switch off”

The party manifesto enjoys only a small link on the homepage of the website and is not easy to find. They state that the following is of key importance:

- Growing the economy and sustainable development
- A World Class Education System
- Universal Healthcare
- Fighting Crime and Ensuring Safety and Security for All

COPE has 2 700 Facebook fans on 13 September and 2 000 followers on Twitter.

There were 14 000 mentions of COPE from 1 February to 12 May. There was a minimum of 40 mentions per day and on 7 May there were over 700 mentions; the majority of the mentions of the party were in relation to other parties.

The topic “TeamCOPESA” was used in some of the conversations about COPE; people who used the words TeamCOPESA in conversation were 19% female and 81% male. Some of the mentions on 7 May:

“@Refie94_Lee Seems like COPE ain't copying though”

“@Exclusive_Oscar nd will forevr be a joke!...cum nxt elections it'll b lyk COPE”

“@Thabiso_Dlamini: Gauteng Latest Results: ANC 50.47%, DA 29.91%, COPE 0.43%, IFP 2.15%, EFF 8.49%, Others 8.56%.”

After the election there were 4 849 mentions of COPE and 297 of the mentions of COPE were negative:

“@The_Leong_King just watched the most disturbing & disgusting video!ANC mob brutally murder a COPE supporter!Free & fair elections?Democracy?#Elections2014”

There were 92 positive mentions:

“@MTshwete COPE did much better than the in 2009 election! Who knows maybe Julius will be the one eating his beret in 2019. Watch the SPACE!”

The majority of the conversations took place on 7 May and after 8 May there were far fewer conversations about the party. Top retweeted tweet with 553 retweets:

“@IECSouthAfrica National Assembly seats: APC-1; PAC-1; AGANG SA-2; ACDP-3; AIC-3; COPE -3; UDM-4; VF Plus-4; NFP-6; IFP-10; EFF-25; DA-89; ANC-249.”

Iol.co.za was the top news site to post about COPE, posting 58 articles that mention COPE.

Comparing this with the criteria for success developed above, it is important to begin by stating that the COPE website is modern and mobile responsive, but it is very sparse in content, and could be made much more user friendly. The biography of the party and the leaders is easy to find but does not have pictures, and it cannot be emailed or shared on social media. The manifesto is only visible on the main page and the party issues could also be made more accessible from other pages.

Campaign news is readily available on the website, but there are very few articles available and the news is generally about the party’s ‘successes’ and does not delve into salient party issues or topical South African issues.

Links to other sites that support the campaign’s ideas and share its thoughts were also found on various pages on the website with links to social media platforms also

visible, but there could be much deeper integration. Donation information, contact information and the volunteer sign-up page are poorly designed, and can, in the case of the sign-up page, only be completed by printing out a form.

COPE also failed to build their communities online, with both the @teamCOPESA and @TerrorLekota engaging very infrequently; and the manner in which they communicate is impersonal, contains links to Facebook, when posting on Twitter, and very little information that users can share or engage with. With COPE, it may even be better for them not to have a social media presence: the way they are currently running their new media strategy does more harm than good as the perception of their being a lacklustre party with no communication strategy is being created.

Offline events were also not supported with online communication; if there was a rally or an event held by COPE, there would not be a picture or video about it.

COPE also failed to address any markets directly with their communication. This was due to their being extremely race and class aware, and trying to avoid the subject completely.

The criteria for success created above listed the following requirements:

- Website analysis based on Kluver: 10 points.
- A targeted marketing campaign: 10 points.
- Communication tool to build an audience: 10 points.
- Community tool to drive offline activations: 10 points.
- South Africa focused to address dual online audiences: 10 points.

COPE did well when compared to the criteria for success listed regarding the website analysis above. But they failed to have a strong new media strategy to support their modern online platforms. There was no engagement strategy in their communication and this meant that they failed to grow their online community, and failed to drive offline activities. They also failed to target any audiences specifically, either on social media or through email newsletters. A score of 15 out of 50 will thus be awarded.

The other 50 points, which are based on a subjective view of their new media strategy, are awarded as follows:

Firstly, there was no clear overarching strategy visible. Platforms such as Facebook, Twitter and YouTube were used poorly, on their own as well as to support each other. Campaign videos were posted on Facebook, and not on their website, which means that they only lived on one place, making the possible audience much smaller.

Secondly, the manner of communication with the electorate was poor. The COPE team often posted only a Facebook link on Twitter, with no context around it. These tweets were not retweeted or favoured, not even by the party leader's Twitter profiles. There is a lot of room for improvement when it comes to COPE's new media communication strategy.

When this is related to the discussions above regarding Dalton's (2014) social group model and representation it is clear that there is a big need for the COPE party, and its leaders, to create an identity that voters can relate to. There were too few comments, posts or tweets that related to the identity of the party, what values it stood for or whom it represented in South Africa. The party leaders also created confusion by being very 'liberal' in their personal online presences, which would, when the more traditional and conservative voter demographic of South Africa is considered, push more voters away than it would attract.

Finally, COPE did not attempt to address youth apathy or focus on harvesting dealigned voters to support them. The party was very middle of the road, and focused heavily on attracting possible dealigned voters, but they did not succeed in presenting themselves as a more organised or stronger party than the ANC or any of the other parties.

Due to these subjective reasons, and the analysis done in the criteria for success, the COPE campaign scores a 30 out of 100 for the way in which they used new media during the 2014 South African national election.

Agang and Mamphela Ramphela

The former anti-apartheid activist Mamphela Ramphela formed Agang in February of 2013. Agang (meaning ‘let us build’ in Sotho-Tswana). The AgangSA.org website has been unreachable for most of the campaign period and after the election it was turned off and has not been reachable since. There is a new website listed on the Agang SA Twitter page, but not on their Facebook page, agangsa-taskteam.org (2014), but this site now has on its homepage:

This site no longer represents Agang SA. The task team members have resigned, and are moving on to a new civic organization that will focus on Agang values, and move away from political representation, which has proved to be a poison that has stopped us from focusing on what we should care about: the daily problems of ordinary people.

Mamphela Ramphela is a medical doctor, former activist against apartheid, an academic and businesswomen. She has had two children with Steve Biko. She has 50 000 followers on Twitter, but she does not have a Facebook page. Facebook does state that 3 000 people like her as a topic.

There were 10 000 mentions of Mamphela Ramphela from 1 February to 12 May. The top retweeted tweet with 361 retweets was posted by @vuyo_mvoko, and he has over 10 000 followers:

“#zille on Ramphela: I offered her the world, she wanted the universe, she's ended up with a shack in poffader #sabcnews #morninglive”

There were peaks in conversations about Mamphela on 3 February, 10 April and 8 May. The peak on 3 May was because of the split between Mamphela's party and the DA; majority of comments were negative. The biggest peak in conversation was on 10 April and this was because of different articles and the two debates that took place on the day:

“DA, ANC ignoring coloured people - Ramphela: Agang SA leader Mamphela Ramphela says that neither the DA nor th...
<http://bit.ly/1eciGGS> “

“#DMGathering Zwelenzima Vavi, Hellen Zille, Mamphela Rampela, Malusi Gigaba on the #Election panel discussion”

“@GwedeMantshel vs @MamphelaR live on @eNCAnews #WitsDebate #20YearsofDemocracy”

Their manifesto focuses on five key topics: empowerment, education, entrepreneurship, employment, and effective governance. These are explained as:

- To see empowerment measured less in terms of scorecards and more in terms of inputs such as quality schooling, effective government and quality healthcare.
- Introduce a 50% minimum pass mark for all subject and grades, while teachers would face competency tests to determine their pay increases and bonuses.
- Slash red tape entangling small businesses, make changes to the tax system and strengthen competition law that would eliminate barriers to entry.
- Focus on skills would convert some public schools to vocational training, with additional funds for on-the-job training for youths trying to enter the workforce.
- “Putting citizens first” by, for example, stopping corruption, demilitarising the police and getting private doctors to run clinics.

Agang has 34 700 followers on Facebook on 13 September and 47 000 on Twitter. The agangsa.org.za website was offline while this study’s analysis was being done. From 1 February to 12 May there were 21 000 mentions posted online about Agang. There was a spike in conversations on 3 February with 1 580 mentions of Agang.

“Ramphele and Zille: The end of the affair”

The news that drove conversation on 3 February: there were negative comments posted by people on the day and jokes were made about the split. 1 439 comments on the day were posted on Twitter, 70% of the audience posting on the day were male. News sites, blogs, forums and Twitter were filled with different comments and articles about the news. News24 posted a tweet that was retweeted 17 times:

“Zille says she realised there was a problem when she saw Ramphele's redraft of her statement. MR wanted to remain Agang leader...”

The second spike in mentions of Agang was on 31 March with over 1 400 mentions. On the day there were 317 negative mentions posted. There were posts being made by the Agang Twitter account; and there was a post about Jacob Zuma by Agang’s Twitter account:

Agang Twitter Post



(Twitter.com, 2014)

People on social media believed that the Agang Twitter account was hacked; however a news article on New24 confirmed that Agang's account was not hacked:

“AgangSA on tweets: There's no polite way to say it
<http://www.news24.com/Elections/News/AgangSA-reacts-Theres-no-polite-way-to-say-it-20140331> “

There were 1 317 posts of Agang on the day of the elections and 2 277 the day after the elections. On 7 May the top retweeted tweet was a tweet by @justicemalala with 245 retweets and 35 favourites:

“@AgangSA: citizen @MamphelaR busted an official with ballot papers in her hands. #IECMustAnswer pic.twitter.com/5J09Yj774p”What!?!?”

After the election there were 2 277 mentions of Agang online on 8 May; 66% of the audience posting about the party were male and 2 174 of the mentions were from Twitter. Overall there were 4 240 mentions of Agang online after the elections. The most mentioned Twitter accounts were @agangsa, @iecsouthafrica and @mamphelar and the most popular tweet was retweeted 553 times:

“National Assembly seats: APC–1; PAC–1; AGANG SA–2; ACDP–3; AIC–3; COPE –3; UDM–4; VF Plus–4; NFP–6; IFP–10; EFF–25; DA–89; ANC–249..”

The hashtag #elections2014 was used 421 times when mentioning Agang on Twitter post elections. Iol.co.za was the top site to mention Agang, mentioning the party 36 times.

It is difficult to compare the Agang website with the criteria for success developed above since there is no website to measure or compare. The second website, agangsa-taskteam.org, has also been abandoned and paints a very poor picture of the party.

During the campaign period, however, Agang did very well in building a following online. They joined Facebook on 15 February and by election time they had already amassed 30 000 followers on Facebook and 40 000 followers on Twitter. Mamphela had amassed over 50 000 Twitter followers. There was a very active engagement strategy where they made sure to post unique and original content on the individual platforms and also to drive conversations between these, thus growing a solid base in a relatively short period of time.

Offline events were also well covered and supported by their social media platforms, with videos, pictures and quotes being sent on the day of the event.

Agang did well to talk to the more educated, female middle class citizen in South Africa and would have done much better were it not for the missteps with the DA and the uncertainty regarding the party funding and Mamphela's long term party commitment.

The criteria for success created above listed the following requirements:

- Website analysis based on Kluver: 10 points.
- A targeted marketing campaign: 10 points.
- Communication tool to build an audience: 10 points.
- Community tool to drive offline activations: 10 points.
- South Africa focused to address dual online audiences: 10 points.

Agang did well to build an online community and drive offline support from there, but was lacking when it came to their targeted campaigns. The website issues were also unnecessary. There was, however, at the inception of the campaign a strong focus on communicating with the youth, as well as on driving a conversation with the many audiences in South Africa. A score of 35 out of 50 will thus be awarded.

The other 50 points, which are based on a subjective view of their new media strategy, are awarded as follows:

Firstly, there was an overarching strategy visible where the various platforms such as Facebook, Twitter and YouTube were used well and supported each other to drive audiences to them.

Secondly, the manner of their communication with the electorate was effective and frequent. The Agang team often posted unique content on the various platforms and made sure that the posts were relevant and would engage with the users.

When the speed at which the new media uptake happened on Agang's platforms is considered, the projected impact on the election outcome should have been much higher; the reason it wasn't is due to, under more, the factor of viable voting populations.

Agang focused on targeting the middle to higher income earner with an interest in "New Party" rhetoric. From what was seen above regarding the viable voting populations in South Africa, the average group voter is still poor, uneducated and religious. This means that even though Agang were well received by the mass media and their average voter, many of their digital consumers were probably aligned with the DA and had little reason to leave the DA for Agang.

Finally, Agang made an effort to talk to the youth and the dealigned, and to motivate people to vote. Unfortunately, near the end of the campaign period, the Agang party was in shambles and they had lost most of the supporters they had garnered during the campaign period.

Due to these subjective reasons, and the analysis done in the criteria for success, the Agang campaign scores a 60 out of 100 for the way in which they used new media during the 2014 South African national election.

Patriotic Alliance and Kenny Kunene

The Patriotic Alliance (PA) was formed in November 2013 by, among others, Gayton McKenzie and Kenny Kunene.

Kenny Kunene is a high profile businessman; he has 53 500 fans on Facebook and 178 000 followers on Twitter on 13 September.

There were 3 456 mentions of Kenny Kunene from 1 February to 12 May 2014. The majority of the conversations were related to the comedy central roast of Kenny Kunene and most of the audience who spoke about Kenny Kunene online were male with 63%.

Even though the elections were on 7 May the peak in conversation that mentioned Kenny Kunene was on 28 April. The top hashtag used in relation to Kenny and elections was the #politicaledge and this was used in 33 tweets with 14 of the tweets being retweets.

Only 20 tweets with the #election2014 mentioned Kenny Kunene. Iol.co.za was the top site to mention Kenny Kunene; iol.co.za posted 38 articles that mentioned Kenny and the majority of the mentions were related to his political party.

Some of the mentions:

“Am watching that idiot“@Lebza_Chivas: Kenny Kunene on #dstv404 #ElectionDebate””

“We must stop politics of personalities: Kenny Kunene - SundayWorld <http://www.sundayworld.co.za/news/2014/05/08/we-must-stop-politics-of-personalities-kenny-kunene> ... via @SundayWorldZA”

“@LuckyBlackmamba @Kenny_T_Kunene @PAparty2014 the only party he can host is a sushi party not a political party!”

“Well done to @Kenny_T_Kunene @Kennyand his Party. 8000+votes. For a 1st time that's good”

The PA manifesto emphasises the empowerment of previously disadvantaged people in South Africa through Black Economic Empowerment (BEE) and Affirmative Action (AA). It is concerned with:

- Employment Equity
- The Fishing Industry
- Decent Housing and Sanitation
- Industrialisation
- Banking and Credit
- Education
- National Healthcare
- Corruption-free Government
- Land Reform

There were 947 mentions of PA online from 1 February to 12 May and 3% of the mentions were negative:

“@Saint_LK: Patriotic Alliance is a useless party man... hehehehe, they can't even get 20 000 votes from Isikhothanes #electionresults #Elections2014”

The top three sites to mention the party were: Twitter (688), iol.co.za (44) and citizen.co.za (21). There was a peak in conversations on 24 April and this was because the EFF leader Julius Malema responded to an open letter by Gayton McKenzie :

“#Letter Speaking to @RediThabi, EFF leader Julius Malema responds to Patriotic Alliance president Gayton McKenzie.”

“@Cybooh so Gayton McKenzie, Patriotic Alliance President wrote dat letter 2 Julius Malema EFF. & replies naye futhi!! yah neh..”

There were only 59 mentions of the party on the day of the elections. There were 224 mentions of the party the day after elections. The EconFreedomZA tweeted about the PA on 8 May: the tweet was retweeted 16 times; and there were 16 favourites and 18 comments on the post:

“@EconFreedomZA: Patriotic Alliance has 7 votes from Gauteng. They're from Gayton, Kenny and their girlfriends.”

After the election there were 296 mentions and conversations were male driven (37 authors). The top retweeted tweet after the elections was a tweet by @sentletse:

“@Sentletse Patriotic Alliance must consolidate the night-club business and leave politics to politicians.”

Some of the comments:

“Rude :’D ”@Vusani_: LMAO RT @EconFreedomZA: Patriotic Alliance has 7 votes from Gauteng. They’re from Gayton, Kenny and their girlfriends.”

Iol News: “Kunene advocates ‘politics of policies’”

Comparing this with the set of criteria for success that was developed, the PA scores as follows:

The website analysis based on Kluver, does not do well. The biographies of the party and its leaders are available, but are not easy to find and not well produced. The party information, for example, references Wikipedia as its source. The manifesto and campaign news are visible on the homepage, but the campaign news is held on a different site, patrioticalliancenes.blogspot.com, which means that it is hard for users to find, and creates a bad user experience. It is also important to note that the users who follow a shared news link to this site will not know that there is another site for the party, and there is no indication of this on the website. There are links to other sites that support the campaign’s ideas and share its thoughts as well as links to social media platforms Facebook and Twitter. There is an option to donate via EFT and multiple ways to contact the party. There is a volunteer sign-up page, but the documents that are needed have to be sent via post or fax. There is very little available in terms of campaign events or photos and no easily accessible campaign calendar.

There was no targeted marketing campaign that could be subscribed to or found on the website. The Twitter campaign that was used made it possible for users to easily receive communication from the PA, but the communication was done poorly and on a very ad hoc basis.

During the campaign period the PA did poorly in building a following online. They joined Facebook on 3 December 2013 and by election time had fewer than 1 000 followers on Facebook or on Twitter. The party leaders, Gayton McKenzie and Kenny Kunene, had 50 000 and 190 000 followers on Twitter, respectively. These audiences were not, however, driven to the PA or followed them due to their party affiliation. Both Kunene and McKenzie are well known for other reasons outside of politics.

Offline events were thus poorly covered by their social media platforms, with some videos, pictures and quotes being sent, but these were infrequent and did not work as an amplification tool.

The PA did well to talk to the Coloured community in the Western Cape, when they held events and focused their communication, but were not able to move voters away from the DA.

The criteria for success created above listed the following requirements:

- Website analysis based on Kluver: 10 points.
- A targeted marketing campaign: 10 points.
- Communication tool to build an audience: 10 points.
- Community tool to drive offline activations: 10 points.
- South Africa focused to address dual online audiences: 10 points.

The PA did not do well when it came to building an online community or driving offline support from there, and was lacking when it came to having a targeted campaign. Their website strategy was very poor. A score of 15 out of 50 will thus be awarded.

The other 50 points, which are based on the subjective view of their new media strategy, are awarded as follows:

Firstly, there was no overarching strategy visible; the various platforms such as Facebook, Twitter and YouTube were not used well and did not support each other to drive audiences to them.

Secondly, the manner of their communication with the electorate was ineffective and ad hoc. The PA team often posted links to Facebook on Twitter without giving a context or considering the users that needed to read the tweets. There was also a lack of focus regarding the party's communication strategy and whom they were targeting with the content they posted online. The political leaders were mostly at fault due to their split personas: on the one hand they concentrated on driving personal agendas, while on the other hand they promoted party principles – and the two approaches were not always aligned. The easy-going position that they adopted, with Kunene and McKenzie each parading their promiscuous behaviour publicly, meant that a large majority of the voting population could not align themselves with either the PA or the party leader.

Finally, although the PA did make an effort to talk to the youth and the dealigned, and to motivate people to vote, this was poorly done and was not effective. Unfortunately, the party leaders were more invested in their personal projects than they were with the party, which means that there was no clear figurehead or clear party message being broadcast.

Due to these subjective reasons, and the analysis done in the criteria for success, the PA campaign scores a 40 out of 100 for the way in which they used new media during the 2014 South African national election.

Conclusion

From this overview of the way the political parties and their party leaders communicated during the 2014 national election in South Africa a few trends have emerged.

The political parties in South Africa have invested in improving their digital communication through running dedicated social media channels on Twitter and in most cases on Facebook and YouTube. They have also invested in their websites to ensure that they are mobile friendly and have relevant content available. They have

also placed a lot of effort into ensuring that their manifestos are easily accessible and consumable.

The communication that they have running on their various pages does not, however, have such a clear strategy in place. Most of the social media platforms that were used were mainly employed reactively.

The scoreboard from the analysis above is as follows:

1. DA: (45,25)	70/100
2. ANC: (30, 30)	60/100
3. AGANG: (35,25)	60/100
4. EFF: (20, 30)	50/100
5. PA: (15,25)	40/100
6. COPE: (15,15)	30/100

This chapter shows that on the one hand there is a lot that can be done to improve the way in which new media is used by the South African political parties. On the other hand, there are opportunities to win over voters by using new media in a smart and strategic way, as witnessed in the previous chapters. It is also clear that the research that can be done regarding how new media is used during elections in South Africa is only beginning and that there is an exciting period of data-rich analysis coming to the field of political science.

Consider, for example, that only a small fraction of what was done in the 2008 Obama campaign has been used by the political parties in South Africa; consider too the speed at which new media platforms are developing and being adopted in South Africa. This means that there is a large evolving online audience and a multitude of potential ways to engage with it.

The content the parties placed online was quite similar – manifestos along with the party leaders’ information – and, apart from the EFF, the content they chose to put on Twitter was not targeted: it did not address the youth apathy trend or break into specific sub-groups to ensure that dealigned voters were garnered. The EFF took a strong position on subjects such as nationalism and focused on the youth; this meant

that they were very popular in specific sub-groups and managed to garner the third most votes in the election.

Parties are also failing to create opinion forming and party-centric conversations with the media or celebrities or individuals with large audiences to drive their party specific agendas. As seen above, voters will adopt the 'issues' the media raises as their own, so without this conversion there is very little informed reasons why voters should move from one party to the other. One way a party can resolve this is through active online debates between the press and the party leaders.

As internet penetration continues to grow in South Africa, the international trend of party dealignment and party disillusionment will grow in South Africa and one of the most important places voters will go to find an alternative party will be online. It will thus be imperative for parties to establish large and well-managed digital audiences.

It is clear from this analysis that there is a lot of room for political parties to improve their new media strategy. They need to both develop the way in which they approach the targeted and selected sub-groups that appeal to them and to also maintain a clear multi-platform communication strategy that speaks to party's faithful core voters and potential voters.

Chapter 5 – Conclusion

This paper has set out to answer the question: How was new media used in the 2014 South African national election? To answer this question various aspects regarding new media, electioneering and the parties and political players involved in the election were analysed.

Firstly, the context surrounding the topic of new media was created to ensure that there existed parameters within which the question could be framed. The short history of new media was used to create the outline for the question and this was coloured in with how politics in general was affected by new media and electioneering specifically. Three case studies – the 2008 Obama campaign, along with the 2014 Indian and Brazilian elections – were used to highlight other aspects of how new media has impacted on electioneering and political campaigns. The work by Russell Dalton from his book, *Citizen Politics*, was used to frame the question within the context of electioneering. From this a set of criteria for success was created to make it possible to provide a measurable answer to the question of whether new media was used well or not.

Secondly, South Africa's media and new media histories were captured as well as a short history of elections in South Africa. This made it possible to better understand the South African landscape and refine the set of criteria for success to ensure that it worked in the context of a South African election and demographic.

Finally, the set of criteria for success was used to gauge how well the political parties and leaders used new media in the 2014 South African election. This was done by analysing the parties and their leaders against the set of criteria for success; and by adding to that a subjective weighting based on the perception created by the parties and their leaders through their engagement with potential voters on these new media platforms.

The scores which offer some answers to the research question 'How was new media used in the 2014 South African national election?' can be ranked as follows:

1. DA: (45,35)	70/100
2. ANC: (30, 30)	60/100
3. AGANG: (35,25)	60/100
4. EFF: (20, 30)	50/100
5. PA: (15,25)	40/100
6. COPE: (15,15)	30/100

From this it is clear that only the DA used new media well in the 2014 election. This was followed by the ANC and Agang, who made use of it but left a lot of room for improvement on their strategies and execution. The EFF, who made poor use of new media, has the most to gain from running a smarter new media campaign. There are currently few leaders with the following Julius Malema has, and there is a strong support base for the EFF when the party outcomes for the 2014 election are compared (IEC, 2014):

1. ANC: (11 million votes)	62% (3.75 down)
2. DA: (4 million votes)	22% (4.62 up)
3. EFF: (1 million votes)	6% (new party)
4. IFP: (441 854 votes)	2% (2.15 down)
5. NFP: (288 742 votes)	1.5% (new party)
6. UDM: (184 636 votes)	1% (.16 up)
7. FFP: (165 715 votes)	.9% (.07 up)
8. COPE: (123 235 votes)	.67% (6.75 down)
9. ACDP: (104 039)	.57% (.24 down)
10. AIC: (104 039)	.53% (new party)
11. AGANG: (52 350)	.28% (new party)

The Patriotic Alliance came 20th in the polls and scored as follows:

PA: (13 263 votes)	.07% (new party)
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The overall use of new media in the 2014 South African national election was rather poor, and when the other parties that were not measured in this study are taken into account, this evaluation becomes even worse.

In general the political parties and their leaders need to dramatically examine what their new media strategy is and ensure that they improve on the way they communicate with their voters, drive offline communication, and especially focus on creating websites that are mobile responsive and have the correct content, links and forms in place to enable supporters to garner more followers for the party. It is also valuable to see that in the case of a party such as the PA it does not help to have a

leader who only has a strong new media following, or is well known. There has to be a strong political party behind a leader to ensure that they have a successful campaign.

There was a general inability, in all the parties involved in this research, to address the social group attachment described in Dalton's (2014) writing. The parties and their leaders, with the exception of Agang and EFF, failed to position themselves as either strongly conservative or liberal. There is a problem in South Africa in that the voting population is very diverse. This forces the parties to split their message into many smaller targeted messages; or to present a vague singular message in the hope that it will resonate with South Africans in general.

The ideal new media strategy to address this diverse voting population would begin by pinpointing the sub-groups identified by Dalton (2014). This would enable the parties to execute a much more focused communication strategy, through the power of targeted online advertising and new media. Engaging directly with these predefined sub-groups, the parties would be in a strong position to send relevant messages that aligned with the groups' specific ideals and needs.

What was also quite interesting was the way in which "New Politics" (Dalton, 2014) was used. The recent post-apartheid history of elections in South Africa is geared strongly towards parties supporting issues such as multiculturalism, gender equality, environmental protection and staying away from overt religious alignments. This means that even though most of the parties identified could be seen as having a "New Party" mentality, in reality the parties are very middle-of-the-road and all focus on similar issues. This is where the EFF stood out with its very pro-nationalism rhetoric that clearly placed it in another camp.

The limitations of this study are that it relied heavily on the data that was captured from the Twitter platform. Ideally there should be more sources to work with to ensure that a more holistic view of the parties and their leaders can be given.

The quality of the communication that was sent out can also be improved considerably. Currently there is a big focus on the number of messages – be they tweets, Facebook posts or media articles that are posted online – but the parties do not

focus on what these messages said, how they were constructed or how they were received or perceived. This study is limited because it was a quantitative study and it could not analyse the quality of the content that was posted on the new media platforms. This means that the parties that have the most active new media profiles, in sheer numbers of tweets or posts, will be presented as having a better strategy; whereas in reality a party that does not tweet or post as much, but creates valuable and relevant content, should be weighted more positively because of it.

Another limitation was that a predefined set of parties and leaders were followed, which limited the quality of analysis that could be done. In future studies there should be an expanded list of profiles followed and only after the election should the refined list be selected. This will ensure that outlier parties and personalities that do well or unexpectedly poorly in the elections are tracked and can be reported on.

Areas for future research are thus:

1. New media clearly has the ability, in a society where there is a large enough online audience, to impact directly on the outcome of an election. With this in mind, and the trend seen above regarding online penetration growth and the EFF's success, is there not a foreseeable possibility of the EFF becoming the main opposition or even the leading party by the next national election in South Africa?
2. New media clearly has an impact on elections, but there is currently no way to accurately measure its impact in an election in South Africa. There is thus room to create an empirical framework that other researchers can use to determine the impact new media has on an election.
3. Currently, party funding is biased towards the incumbent. How will party funds be utilised and dispersed among parties if new media is more or less free or very cheap and should funding for traditional forms of media then not increase for parties that fare poorly? How democratic is this?

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